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13 Tories defy party whips

Fishing rebels inflict defeat by two votes

By Philip Webster and Jill Sherman

THE Government suffered an embarrassing blow last night when Tory MPs combined with Labour to defeat it over the European fisheries policy.

In spite of a frantic whipping exercise, John Major's fragile parliamentary position was vividly exposed as MPs representing fishing communities, Euro-sceptics and most opposition members lined up against him.

With more than a dozen Conservatives rebelling, the Government lost by two votes in its most embarrassing defeat since the revolt over VAT on fuel a year ago.

The Tories were protesting at the way the common fisheries policy had damaged the British industry and warning the Government that it must win better quotas in negotiations beginning tomorrow. They were also opposing moves to allow Spanish boats into traditional British waters from next year.

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, said the Government would give "due weight" to what had happened in the debate and promised that it would "vigorously represent" UK interests in the Brussels negotiations.

Although the defeat was on a technical motion and has no immediate impact, it was the last result Mr Major needed at the end of yet another dismal year for the Tories.

Tony Blair said the Government was unravelling and declared: "It is unable to lead. It is increasingly unable to govern. The parliamentary year is ending as it began: in incompetence, division and chaos." The idea that the Government could limp on for another 16 months was becoming more and more unsustainable.

Labour had mounted an impressive operation to inflict

THE REBELS

The Conservatives William Cash, MP for Stafford, and Michael Carttiss (Great Yarmouth) voted against the Government, while John Wilkinson, Richard Shepherd, Christopher Gill, Teresa Gorman, Tony Marlow, Sir Teddy Taylor, David Wilshire, Peter Thurnham, Rupert Allason, David Porter and Hugh Dykes abstained.

All seven Ulster Unionists who attended the debate voted against the Government.

A final defeat on the Government before the Commons rises today for the Christmas recess. Members were called back from abroad and several sick MPs were brought to the House. Two were "nodded through" because they were too ill to walk through the division lobbies.

The Government had a majority of only eight against a Labour amendment calling for reforms to the fisheries policy, before being defeated on its own motion taking note of recent developments in the policy.

The defeat came in spite of attempts to buy off Tory MPs in fishing constituencies by reversing some £12 million cuts in grants to harbours announced in the Budget last month. Ministers also announced that the Spanish Government would pay £100,000 compensation to British fishermen whose nets were destroyed in the "tuna wars" last year.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary who will put the British case in Brussels, had tried to head off the revolt by telling Tories that they risked compromising the respect they had earned among fishermen by lining up with Labour.

whom he dubbed a "bunch of sellout merchants".

Those calling for withdrawal from the common fisheries policy should consider carefully the practicalities and costs of that action, he said. Scrapping the policy would be a "monumental and probably impossible task", needing unanimity among EU states which "could only be bought at a huge price".

Seventeen Tories had earlier signed an amendment calling for a 200-mile exclusion zone around the UK, and for Britain to leave the policy.

Mr Forsyth alleged that Labour would "sail under a white flag" in the EU, but the Government would always fight for the right of British fishermen to fish around UK shores, consistent with maintaining stocks. "Let this House send out the clearest signal that we are united in our determination not just to get the best deal on quotas, but to achieve a long-term solution which offers this vital industry the security it deserves."

But David Porter, MP for Waveney, Suffolk, described Mr Forsyth's speech as "Orwellian", saying: "He was claiming the success of the CFP which will choke most of the fishermen of Lowestoft."

Gavin Strang, Labour's fisheries spokesman, said the fisheries policy was fundamentally flawed. Its priority must be the conservation of stocks and that priority was not being met; too many boats were chasing too few fish.

He added: "The UK Government must take its share of the blame here. Their recalcitrance over decommissioning and the consequent failure to reduce pressure on stocks will further hinder the chances of matching fishing effort with fish stocks."

Fishing debate, page 8



David Ashby wept after the verdict. "Just leave me" he said as he brushed aside the consolations of his wife Sylvia, the main witness against him

Tories seek to save MP from bankruptcy after £500,000 defeat in libel action

By Michael Horsnell, Kathryn Knight and Arthur Leathley

SENIOR Conservatives last night rallied round to save David Ashby from financial ruin as he faced a £500,000 bill for a failed libel action in which he was branded a lying, hypocritical homosexual.

A rescue fund could prove vital for the Government, since any MP made bankrupt has to stand down. The Conservatives would almost certainly lose the resultant by-election — Mr Ashby held his Leicestershire North-West seat by only 979 votes in 1992 — and that could leave John Major with a Commons majority of one.

The costs of Mr Ashby's action against *The Sunday Times* astonished many at Westminster, but there was immediate confidence that the party's grandees would be able to call on prosperous contacts for help — even though the amount involved is

huge compared with previous rescue operations.

Mr Ashby, a former Name who suffered substantial losses at Lloyd's, had sought damages over an article in January last year alleging that he shared a double bed with another man during a holiday in Goa.

But the jury found against him in a majority decision after five hours' deliberations and he put his head in his hands and wept when the verdict was announced. His estranged wife Sylvia, who gave evidence for *The Sunday Times* during the four-week hearing, crossed the court to comfort him. But as she put her arm round him and kissed the back of his neck, he told her: "Just leave me."

He was given a police escort as he left the High Court for his Temple chambers after issuing a statement saying: "I

am deeply disappointed by the decision of the court today. I am very grateful for the kind support of my constituents during what has been a most traumatic ordeal."

He then went to the Commons where he was cheered by MPs on both sides of the House as he rose to ask the Prime Minister a question. He thanked the Speaker and sat down, looking bleak, for a few minutes before leaving the chamber.

Mr Ashby is now expected to have a few days' holiday before returning to his constituency home in Ravenstone, Leicestershire, where he will meet local party officials.

Clifford McKee, the constituency chairman, said: "It was a great shock to find out he'd lost and a great sadness, too. I think most of us were surprised at the jury's decision but I think he was brave to

take the action. We are not in the business of making instant decisions. I expect to see Mr Ashby next week to discuss his future, and after that we will have a meeting with the constituency executives who will make a final decision."

Asked whether Mr Ashby had considered that his career might be at risk if he lost, Mr McKee said: "In his mind there was no question of losing, so everything was predicated on winning."

Lord Crawshaw, the association president, said he expected to meet Mr Ashby and other party members in the

new year to consider who should be the candidate for the general election, adding: "I would not advise that the matter should be rushed."

Mr Ashby, a 55-year-old barrister, had claimed that the *Sunday Times* article alleged that he was a homosexual who had misled his wife about his sexuality; that he had lied to the public about having an affair with Ciaran Kilduff, an Irish doctor with whom he admitted sharing a double bed in France; and that he was a

Continued on page 4 col 8

Wife's love, page 3

JUST A SMALL ONE.

Red Cross in appeal for Afghanistan

By Michael Dynes

THE British Red Cross today launched an emergency appeal for Afghanistan, whose 17 million people are facing a humanitarian catastrophe after 16 years of invasion and unrelenting civil war.

An estimated 85 per cent of the capital, Kabul, has been reduced to rubble after devastating clashes between government forces and the radical Taliban militia. Most of Kabul is without electricity and food is scarce.

Rain of destruction, page 12
Leading article, page 17

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Bottomley gives regulator of lottery a second chance

By Arthur Leathley, Political Correspondent

PETER DAVIS is to keep his job as regulator of the National Lottery but was yesterday sternly rebuked by Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, for accepting free flights from a company linked to Camelot.

Mrs Bottomley ended more than a week of speculation about Mr Davis's future by telling him that she still had confidence in him, despite his admission of close contacts with the lottery operator.

Before making the decision, she demanded an assurance from Mr Davis that there would be no further damaging revelations about his contacts with Camelot. She also told him during a 20-minute meeting that he was unwise to accept flights from G7Tech, the American firm with a 22 per cent stake in Camelot.

The decision came 48 hours after senior figures in Mrs Bottomley's department told journalists to expect his dismissal. Mrs Bottomley's colleagues denied that she had been deterred from dismissing Mr Davis by the cost of paying off his five-year contract on a salary of £84,000.

Mrs Bottomley wrote to Mr Davis: "You retain my confidence... there is not, and never has been, any doubt about your integrity." However, she added: "I do not think your acceptance of the flights was wise in the context of your role as regulator of the lottery."

Mrs Bottomley made it clear that the decision had been taken after his assurance "that there are no other issues which may come to light subsequently which could affect my decision in this matter."



Davis: told to distance himself from lottery firms

Mr Davis was also ordered to distance himself from companies involved in running the lottery. Mrs Bottomley said on *Channel Four News* last night that she had no plans to alter the powers of the regulator.

Mr Davis said in a statement: "I am grateful to the Secretary of State for her expression of confidence in me as the regulator of the National Lottery. I am looking forward to continuing my work of ensuring that the National Lottery is run properly, that players' interests are protected, and that the maximum funds are raised for the good causes."

Mr Davis, Director-General of Oflot, the Office of the National Lottery, was urged to resign after admitting to the Commons Public Accounts Committee last week that he accepted flights in helicopters and private jets belonging to G7Tech. He also stayed at the Long Island home of Carl Menges, the firm's non-executive director, who has been a family friend for 20 years.

Leading article, page 17

Holloway visitors tell of their fears

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

MINISTERS were told months ago by Holloway's Board of Visitors of mounting alarm at the deterioration in conditions for the jail's hundreds of women inmates.

The board told of serious staff shortages, huge amounts of rubbish strewn around and prisoners being locked in cells for long periods. It also expressed anxiety about low morale in the education department and the number of mentally ill offenders detained in the health care unit.

Lesley Harvey, board vice-chairman, said yesterday: "There are many, many complaints that we have made. They are seen by the Government. We have sent letters to ministers and what the inspector has said is exactly what we have been saying for some time."

Sir David Ramsbotham, the new Chief Inspector of Prisons, took the unprecedented step of terminating his inspection after finding women locked in their cells for up to 23 hours a day, poor health care, inadequate education and other activities, low staff morale and filthy conditions.

One Prison Service source

said conditions in the London jail were dreadful. "You name it, it was awful. The place was a shambles," the source said.

Yesterday, as 16 temporary staff drafted from jails in Kent in an attempt to improve conditions arrived at Holloway, the position of the Governor, Janet King, who has been at the jail for 20 months, was under question.

Mrs King, formerly a governor at Strangeways Prison in Manchester, is understood to have asked for an extra 60 officers. A further 25 full-time members of staff will arrive next month.

But penal reform groups and the Prison Officers' Association said a 13.3 per cent Prison Service budget cut during the next three years threatened to cause a further deterioration in conditions.

Last night senior Prison Service sources said Mrs King should not be made a scapegoat. The jail has 561 inmates compared with a certified normal population of 517. In October an extra £300,000 was allocated to help to tackle the problems.

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THE FAMOUS GROUSE
FINEST SCOTCH WHISKY

Fishermen's friends swept into net on the tide of ambition

This morning, no doubt, the fisherman's new-found friends at Westminster are his quayside toast. But had he time to watch yesterday's debate he would raise his glass with hesitation. One of the most risible scenes in the Westminster farce is the spectacle of MPs professing sudden and special sympathy for a previously neglected group.

Their sympathy is touching. Are you a sewage worker? They know what it's like down there in the drains among the rats. Are you a

miner? Why, their own fathers had toiled in the pits. Are you an ocean fisherman? Ah, Sir Edward Heath knows your skipper. As a child in Kent (he told us during yesterday's debate) he had watched the fishing boats come home.

Nor did his comradeship with the line, the net, the whitebait and the tunny end there. "During my 15 years' ocean racing," he rumbled, "he had been able to observe the industry at the closest quarters."

"I bet you just waved at

them as you sailed past," shouted the impertinent Dennis Skinner. "It's no laughing matter," harrumphed Sir Edward. We were witnessing an angry elderly statesman, driven beyond endurance by what he saw as piracy on the high seas.

Euro-sceptical Tories yesterday hijacked the fishermen's cause and, all at once, the tiny group of backbenchers who really do speak for the fishing industry found its lobby swamped by a rabid gang of Brussels-baiters clenching to their breasts instant expertise



POLITICAL SKETCH

on mackerel landings, net size and the Irish Box. Teresa Gorman (C), from gale-lashed Billerica, joined Tony Marlow (C) from wave-battered Northampton North and Christopher Gill (C), wiping the salt from his eyes after a weekend on the shores of Ludlow. Of such was the new band of Tory fishermen's friends formed. Labour's sud-

den sympathy for these British flag-wavers looked equally suspect, their leader's constant complaint being that John Major is "isolated" in Europe. Why had the Labour Walrus joined the Euro-sceptic Tory Carpenters in weeping now, for the whittings and oysters?

This question was put persistently by the minister lead-

ing for the Government, Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth. But Forsyth's own role was a rum one. Mr Forsyth is a convinced Euro-sceptic. But ambition breeds obedience and Forsyth is doing well. He has taken the Cabinet's shilling. In choosing him to tempt the rebels over, the Government was parading one of its top prisoners.

The trouble with parading prisoners is that they do not speak their lines with the required enthusiasm. Attack-

ing Labour, Forsyth was convinced and convincing; but pleading with the Tory rebels he stumbled through his civil servants' cribsheet like a child in Reading Aloud class. The rebels understood the unwitting message. The body language was clear.

An unforgettable sight was to watch Mr Forsyth watching Sir Edward Heath, as the latter defended his European record on fisheries. Aware that an expression of solemn approbation was expected of a government minister on this occasion, but unable quite to bring himself

to nod, Forsyth kept his head quite still, like a snake watching an exceptionally big rabbit. When Sir Edward sat down Forsyth realised that he was supposed to say "hear, hear". His mouth opened but his throat wouldn't do it. He just held his lips slightly parted, like those godparents at confirmations who do not believe the words, but wish to be polite. But he uttered not a peep. One day, after all, Mr Forsyth may need to cast his net on the other side.

First sale of British Rail franchises

Privatisation critics condemn buyer of southwest network

By JONATHAN FRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH RAIL'S 48-year monopoly on train services came to an end yesterday when three passenger franchises were sold to private bidders.

The sales of the South West Trains, Great Western and LTS Rail franchises mean that about 20 per cent of the BR network will be privately operated by April. South West Trains, the biggest franchise, was acquired by Stagecoach, Britain's largest bus company. Great Western and LTS Rail went to staff buyouts.

The sales, after weeks of legal uncertainty, were hailed by Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, as "an enormous step forward in the development of the railways in this country".

But there was criticism of the choice of Stagecoach, which is bidding for all 25 passenger franchises. Critics said it would be running fewer services at a higher cost to the taxpayer.

South West Trains runs services between Waterloo, London, and the commuter belt in Surrey, Dorset and Hampshire, with tickets worth more than £245 million sold to 95 million passengers a year. Stagecoach will receive a

subsidy of £55 million a year to take over the services.

Great Western, which runs InterCity trains to the west Country and South Wales from Paddington, London, has passenger revenues of £156 million a year and receives an annual subsidy of about £50 million. The management buyout is backed by First Bus, the second-biggest bus company in Britain, and 3i, the venture capital group.

LTS Rail operates commuter trains from south Essex and has revenues of £53 million. Further details of the staff buyouts are to be announced this morning.

The staff takeovers at Great Western and LTS Rail are likely to mean only limited changes at their head offices, but staff at South West Trains were preparing themselves for upheaval. Managers from Stagecoach will move into the London headquarters today to oversee the handover.

Stagecoach was started with the backing of a £25,000 redundancy cheque in 1980 by its chairman, Brian Souter, a former bus driver, and his sister, Ann Gloag. It now controls a quarter of the British bus market.

Its aggressive expansion

has caused controversy and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission accused it last summer of "predatory and deplorable" behaviour.

Brian Wilson, a Labour transport spokesman, said: "This is a sad day for Britain's railways. The taxpayer is being forced to subsidise the fragmentation of the network."

"It is particularly ironic that privatisation, which began with rhetoric on competition, has ended up with the first franchise going to a ruthlessly anti-competitive company which has faced 24 inquiries into its predatory behaviour."

Mr Souter dismissed the criticism, saying that he planned to continue all existing South West services and would not increase fares. "It is our intention to maintain the present service levels and we will seek to improve services where opportunities arise," he said.

Stagecoach intends to run bus services from towns that lost their rail lines during the Beeching cuts of the early 1960s to restore their connections to the train network. Other planned innovations include closed-circuit television on trains to improve security, and higher reliability targets.



Consul Patricia Castano, left, criticised conditions in Holloway, where Sara Thornton wrote her damning letter



Inmate tells of 'rat-infested tomb'

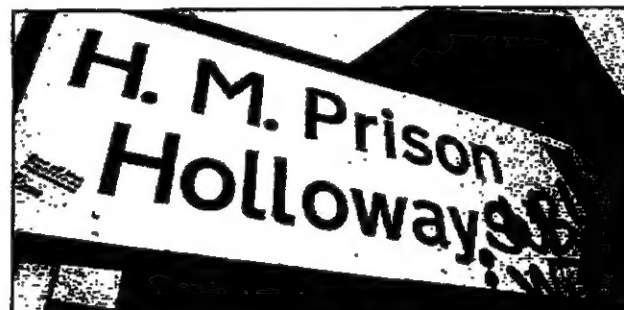
By STEPHEN FARRELL

HOLLOWAY PRISON was a "rat-infested concrete tomb", the former inmate Sara Thornton told Prison Service chiefs seven months ago.

Mrs Thornton, who faces a retrial in the new year for killing her violent husband, protested at conditions inside the jail where two prisoners committed suicide this year.

Her complaints were echoed by others, including Chris Tchakovsky, director of the campaign group Women in Prison, who yesterday claimed prison officers had forced women who had just given birth "to breastfeed in chains".

The Prison Service yesterday refused to confirm or



deny whether women were made to wear clogging chains — handcuffs with a chain linking them to a warder — while breastfeeding. However, a spokesman said it was "not beyond the realms of possibility".

Mrs Thornton, 38, wrote a four-page letter to her MP, obtained by *The Times*, with instructions that it should be passed to Derek Lewis, former Director-General of the Prison Service.

Mrs Thornton wrote on May 22: "The regime here in Holloway is so bad, so demoralising for both staff and inmates, that a glass ban is an attempt to keep the lid on a prison ready to erupt."

"You place emphasis on money, none on people. Pris-

ons are about people, but you're an accountant and you fail to understand that."

Protesting at the death of Lungile Simelane, who committed suicide by hanging herself in her cell in May, she wrote: "Tell me, Mr Lewis, do you accept responsibility for Simmie's death? Do you accept responsibility for this rat-infested concrete tomb?"

Patricia Castano, deputy consul at the Colombian Embassy, said yesterday after seeing drug couriers held inside: "The conditions are much better than in Colombian prisons but it is overcrowded and there is a lack of staff. Many of these women are poor and ignorant, not hardened criminals." Emma Humphreys, who was freed

from Holloway in July after her successful appeal against a murder sentence for killing her boyfriend, said: "The way that we were treated was disgusting. We were barely let out of our cells and hardly any attention was paid to our mental and physical health, leaving some inmates suicidal or desperately ill."

"The idea that prison is like a holiday camp is a ludicrous one. One week in Holloway would prove that. It's about time things changed."

Another former prisoner said constant searches carried out by staff drove them mad. Karen Stott, who spent a week in Holloway recently, yesterday emerged after visiting a friend and said: "It is really 24-hour lock-up all the time. There's not much association with other prisoners each day and you are lucky to get it. The mood is very tense because it's just all women with nothing to do."

However, one mother of two who recently served seven days for non-payment of a fine told reporters: "It's disgusting, and you can't eat the food, but that's what you expect — it's a prison, not a holiday camp."

Trimble tells Major of plans for assembly

John Major and David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, spent an hour at Downing Street yesterday afternoon discussing unionist plans for an elected assembly in Northern Ireland.

Mr Trimble has floated the idea of an assembly as an alternative to exploratory talks as a way of establishing a dialogue with Sinn Féin. The Prime Minister has expressed interest in the proposal, which could allow all-party talks without the republicans first agreeing to abandon some of their weapons.

Afterwards Mr Trimble said he was encouraged by the outcome of his talks, which were also attended by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary.

Meningitis death

A student has died from meningitis six hours after reporting sick to her university doctor. Suzanne Williams, 18, a student at Leicester University, was taken to Leicester Royal Infirmary where she died from meningococcal septicaemia, a virulent strain of meningitis. Other students have been alerted to the symptoms.

Officer's 'error'

An Army officer who went to a golf tournament in a military helicopter has been disciplined but will not face court martial. Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Cannon, commander of the 3rd Battalion The Highland Regiment, was found guilty of an "error of judgment" in taking the helicopter from Nairn, Highland, to Prestwick, Strathclyde.

Redwood's plea

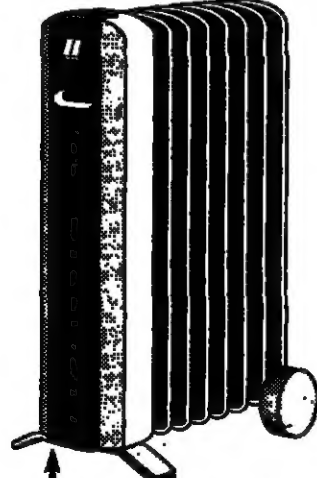
John Redwood calls today for Britain to reassert its traditional role as a brake on ambitions of over-mighty continental powers. The former Cabinet minister, writing in *The Times*, equates the drive to political and monetary union to a merger between France and Germany aimed at creating a "colossal power". Speaking for Europe, p16

Titanic libel

An 83-year-old expert on the sinking of the *Titanic* was given an apology and "substantial" damages by Patrick Stephens Ltd, publishers of *The Ship That Stood Still* at the High Court. Leslie Reade's book claimed that Leslie Harrison, a retired master mariner, had pressured a witness to change his story while investigating the disaster.

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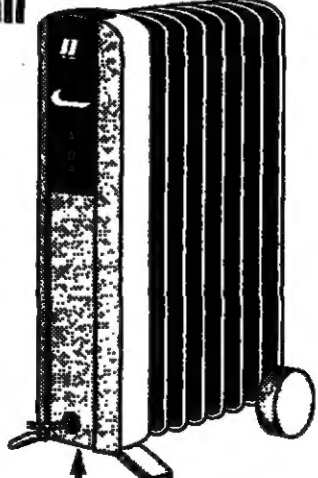
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MPs want change on lifers' release

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

MPs called yesterday for the scrapping of the Home Secretary's power to decide how long prisoners serving life for murder should stay in jail. In a report which may fuel the furor over Myra Hindley, the MPs said it was wrong for a politician to make the decision.

The report, by the influential Home Affairs Committee chaired by Sir Ivan Lawrence, QC, also questioned the part that public opinion can play in setting a murderer's release date. Although the Home Secretary might be best-placed to respond to public opinion, said the MPs, that "public opinion is not necessarily the surest guide" to when murderers should be released.

Instead, the Parole Board should assess the risk of releasing murderers as it does with discretionary life sentence prisoners, the MPs recommended. The committee is to make a further report on the details of how the release of murderers would be decided, without the involvement of the

Home Secretary. Their report coincides with the pending Parole Board review of Hindley, the Moors murderer, in the new year. The Board would then make recommendations to the Home Secretary but these are not binding. Last year, Michael Howard said she should remain inside for life.

The MPs do not favour scrapping the mandatory life sentence for murder, as suggested by some senior legal figures.

The Lord Chancellor is ending the secret selection procedures for part-time judges, under which lawyers may wait for years to hear if they are being chosen for the bench. In future, lawyers aspiring to the judiciary will apply to published advertisements and go through new selection procedures, Lord Mackay of Clashfern said.

Annual selection procedures will be introduced for all assistant recorderships, the stepping-stone to a career as a judge.

Councils delay curbs on asylum

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE Government's proposals to cut benefits to asylum seekers are threatened by further delay after a High Court decision to allow two councils to challenge the move.

The local authorities were given permission yesterday to seek a judicial review of the plans to save £200 million a year. Last week the Government had to announce the postponement of the start date for the changes from January 8 so that Parliament had a chance to debate the measures, which will affect 13,000 asylum seekers.

The legal challenge by Tory-controlled Westminster Council and Labour Hammersmith and Fulham Councils on the fact that asylum seekers will lose entitlement to housing benefit but local authorities will still have a duty to house them until new legislation comes into force in July. They argue that the move will land them with a bill of up to £50 million.

The councils say that the measures will not create savings but only pass the financial burden from central to local government. The Social Security Secretary's proposals will end benefit to any asylum seekers appealing against a refusal of refugee status and to anyone who applies for asylum having entered Britain for another reason, for instance as a visitor or student.

Mr Justice May rejected an argument from Stephen Richards, for Peter Lilley, that the legal move was premature. Mr Richards said the Government's proposals were still open to debate in Parliament and that there was no effective decision yet to be reviewed by the court.

The Government says the clampdown will "remove an unwarranted burden on public funds and make clear the limits of what the Government believes to be publicly acceptable". Refugees argue that the move will force asylum seekers on to the streets.

Self-styled Lucifer loved terrorising robbery victims

By JOANNA BALE

A ROBBER who called himself Lucifer and gloried in terrorising his wealthy victims in their homes at night was convicted yesterday.

During an eight-week trial, a jury at Middlesex Crown Court was told how Keith Bramble chose mansions in north London, deliberately stalking professional people such as solicitors, doctors and company directors. He believed he would never be caught "because he had the cunning of the devil," said Martin Heslop, QC, for the prosecution.

In his worst attack, the 6ft 5in robber kicked an 89-year-old man on the floor. A police surveillance operation finally trapped him and an accomplice. Yesterday Bramble, 36, was found guilty of three charges of robbery, and one charge of assault with intent. Sentence is to be passed today.

The jury had been told that Bramble would dress all in black, his face covered with a scarf, before breaking into houses, often armed with weapons including crowbars, knives and screwdrivers.

In November last year, two sisters, Linda and Wendy Ashley, were watching television and looking after young children at Totteridge, Hertfordshire. Mr Heslop said: "Wendy looked up and was horrified to see a huge man in black clothes come into the kitchen holding a crowbar, with a mask concealing his face."

He called the sisters "bitches" and demanded their jewellery. He then tried to lock them in a bathroom before ransacking their house. The women escaped further threats by pretending they were au pairs who did not know where valuables were kept.

They raised the alarm and police used a helicopter with an infra-red tracking device to pursue the robber. Bramble bragged later: "They know it's me, they know it's my work. Lucifer is the only one they would come out for with a helicopter."

He squandered his £10,000 haul on prostitutes and drugs, then struck again. His next victims were lawyers living at a large, luxury house backing on to woods in north London. Debra Finkler, a solicitor, was reading a bedtime story to her two-year-old James when Bramble burst in. The court

was told: "Suddenly she looked up and there in the doorway was a man well over 6ft tall. He had an athletic build and a mask tied round his face like a highwayman. She was horrified."

She was told not to move but, as Bramble started walking towards a children's bedroom, she ran downstairs shouting: "There is a man in the house."

Mr Heslop added: "He walked around as if he had a right to be there. He took his pick of the valuables."

Mrs Finkler's husband Alan was holding their daughter Theodora, aged seven months. Mr Finkler shouted for their nanny to call the police but, counsel said, Bramble snarled: "Don't be stupid, you



Bramble: believed he would never be caught

don't want the children hurt, do you?" Mr Finkler was pushed about, still clutching his daughter, as Bramble snatched his expensive wristwatch then disappeared into the woods.

The most terrifying robbery took place a week later, when Bramble took his accomplice, Anthony Gabbidon, 31.

Having dinner at their home in Finchley, north London, were William Angel, a 69-year-old company director, his wife Frances, 67, and her brother, Dr Bernard Berman, 89, who is stricken with Alzheimer's disease.

As Mrs Angel went to the kitchen, she was cornered by Bramble who growled at her then ran past to attack her husband. Mr Angel defended himself with a small table, but

Bramble threw this aside and then turned on the elderly doctor. He was pushed to the floor and kicked. Mr Angel warned Bramble that his victim was very ill and likely to die from the shock, but Bramble was "remorseless and showed no compassion", counsel said.

He released the Angels but said he would shoot them. He also told Mr Angel he would poke his eye out with a screwdriver if he failed to reveal the whereabouts of his safe. The pair escaped with jewellery and cash from the safe.

However, police had tracked them to the house, and were waiting outside. Bramble injured several officers in a struggle as they tried to arrest him.

Mr Heslop said: "These robberies were terrifying. They were highly professional, carefully prepared and ruthlessly carried out."

He bragged about how confident he was of never being caught. He said he only hit really large houses where there would be lots of money. He said he enjoyed terrorising his victims and sneaking up on them. He would wait in woodland for the weather to change because it was better when rain and wind covered the noise. Bad weather also made it difficult for police and police dogs to track him.

"He claimed there was nothing police could do because he was as cunning as the devil. He said at one time he was protected by the devil."

Bramble, of Tottenham, north London, denied the three robberies and assault while resisting arrest. Gabbidon, also of Tottenham, admitted robbery and was found guilty of wounding with intent.

Bramble was jailed in 1990 for six years for two aggravated burglaries. His latest robberies were the subject of two trials. The first was aborted after Bramble's defence barristers retired through ill-health related to heart problems. A juror was discharged after he became sick, and on the final day a second juror was also unwell.

Detective Inspector John Shatford said of Bramble: "He is an extremely dominating, manipulative and evil man. Everyone he knew was too scared to stand up to him. He is used to getting his way."

Silvana Ashby wants to rebuild friendship with husband



Silvana Ashby outside the High Court yesterday. She said: "I want to make it clear that I am not obsessively jealous"

I still love him, says wife who gave evidence against MP

By KATHRYN KNIGHT AND MICHAEL HORSNELL

SILVANA ASHBY said yesterday that she still loved her husband and had no plans to divorce him after the traumatic four-week libel action. Mrs Ashby, who rushed to comfort her husband in court but was pushed away, said it would be a long time before the family recovered from the raw wounds exposed by the case.

However, she hopes she can now build a friendship with her husband of 30 years, and said her main concern was to resume a normal relationship with their daughter Alexandra, 27, who gave evidence for her father.

Despite the acrimonious battle between them, the couple often kissed each other on the cheek, each morning before taking their seats on opposite sides of the courtroom. "This case does not mean the end of everything, we still have to get on with our lives. I still care for David, I don't want to hurt him, I feel very sorry for him," she said.



Alexandra: she gave evidence for her father

"The most important thing is to try and rebuild our family relationships."

Mrs Ashby, who was born in Turin, northern Italy, hugged her husband as he sat with his head in his hands after the verdict but he pushed her away. "I said 'I'm very sorry' but he said 'Just leave me,'" she said.

She said Alexandra had telephoned her the night before the verdict, asking if she could fly from Italy to spend

Christmas with her mother at the family home in Putney, southwest London. She said she wanted to be with her daughter but admitted it would be "difficult".

In court Alexandra, a stockbroker, claimed to love her parents equally but sat with her father and denounced her mother's possessiveness, saying "I criticise her methods. I don't criticise her for being unhappy."

Mrs Ashby said: "I love my daughter and I forgive her but it will be a long time before things get back to normal. I will spend Christmas in England because I cannot leave my dogs. We will see what happens." She said she had no plans to return permanently to Italy, where she met and fell in love with Mr Ashby 31 years ago on a skiing holiday in the Alps.

The couple spent three days together, talking in French because neither could speak the other's language. "We just clicked. We had something in common and I admired his thinking," she said. "I hope to

stay in England. Perhaps there will be a situation where I spend eight months here and four months in Italy."

Earlier, in a statement outside the High Court immediately after the verdict, she said she gained no pleasure from seeing her husband lose the expensive libel action and had frequently asked him to drop the case. "On numerous occasions I asked him to think twice before continuing with the case which I did not think would be in anybody's long term interests."

However, she emphasised that she had been distressed by accusations of jealousy and hysteria in court.

The statement said: "I want to make it clear that I am not 'obsessively jealous' and have never shown 'extreme hatred or violence' towards David or anyone else. While I regret some of the language in the letters I wrote — and which were read in court — they were the product of the emotional turmoil that I was going through in the latter part of 1993."

Colleagues rally to loser in libel case

Continued from page 1

hypocrite in having emphasised the importance of the family in his election address. Times Newspapers and the former Sunday Times editor Andrew Neil denied libel, although they accepted that Mr Ashby did not go on holiday to Goa with a man. They maintained that he was and still is having an affair with Dr Kilduff.

After the verdict, the newspaper's solicitor, Alastair Brett, said he would expect the present editor, John Witherow, to see the case as a "tragic family problem" and be sensible about what to do now. "We will have to show magnanimity in our victory."

A statement from The Sunday Times said: "We are obviously delighted to have won the case. We are sorry that Mr Ashby decided to take us to court and that he now faces a substantial legal bill. But it was his choice. His case and ours could not have been more fully aired in the High Court."

Mr Brett said that the biggest liability facing Mr Ashby "by a long way" was the bill from his solicitor, Peter Carter-Ruck, and his barristers.

Mr Ashby, who told the court that he had financial problems, resigned from Lloyd's two years ago after suffering substantial but unspecified losses. He jointly owns with his wife their marital home in Putney, which is worth about £400,000, and a constituency house worth about £260,000. He, alone, also owns an £80,000 flat in Putney, which is rented out. His mortgages are understood to total more than £70,000.

He has an income as a criminal barrister on top of his salary as an MP, but the effect of the case on his career at the Bar remains uncertain.

Senior Tories yesterday expressed their determination to help him and launched a campaign "to keep him buoyant" that was immediately evident in his reception in the Commons.

The Government's majority of five has made it more important than usual to ensure that Mr Ashby does not go under — the Tories already face a by-election in South East Staffordshire that could cut that advantage to three and they would almost certainly lose Mr Ashby's seat if that were contested.

Drunken lawyer 'lunged at girl'

By A STAFF REPORTER

A LEADING criminal lawyer indecently assaulted a student as she left a nightclub, Bristol Crown Court was told yesterday. Richard Levene, 38, was drunk and lost his "proper inhibitions" when he lunged at the 19-year-old. Then when he turned to run away he bumped into a tree and broke his glasses.

Mr Levene, a barrister with the Crown Prosecution Service, allegedly molested the girl as she and a friend left a party in Bristol in July.

A passer-by heard screams and called at a police station. Police drove the girls around until they saw Mr Levene dodging in and out of shop doorways. He had marks on his face which he claimed were from an argument in a restaurant.

The student, who had been

celebrating the end of her college course, said: "A man approached us really quickly and made a grab for me. My friend ran off after him but he had hit the tree and his glasses had fallen. As he hit the tree, I think that he swore. I screamed out, my friend screamed out. He ran down the street."

Mr Levene, of Henleaze, Avon, denies indecent assault. When he was interviewed by police the following day, he claimed he had been attacked, and had used force to defend himself before running away.

Earlier, Charles Barton, QC, for the defence, asked his client's alleged victim: "Do you say that you can exclude the possibility that it was a drunken mistake?" "No," she replied.

The trial continues.



PC Godber arriving for the disciplinary hearing

Assault case PC to keep his job

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE community policeman who was facing dismissal for pulling a teenage boy's ear had the threat lifted yesterday. There was a public outcry last month when PC Nicholas Godber was convicted of common assault on the 15-year-old boy as he attempted to stop his rowdy behaviour in a shopping arcade. An anonymous well-wisher from his home town of Baildon in West Yorkshire paid his £600 costs and fine and the £50 compensation he was ordered to give the youth.

Yesterday at an internal disciplinary hearing in Wakefield, Keith Hellawell, the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, delivered a formal caution, the minimum punishment possible. After the hearing PC Godber, 37, said: "The last months have pro-

duced a few trying moments for my family and me, but we have been given such outstanding support from my wider family, friends, colleagues, neighbours at home, the people of Baildon and Shipley and indeed people from all walks of life from all over the country and abroad."

He said that money donated by well-wishers would be given to local charities. He would not discuss the incident last January but said: "I do want to put things into perspective. The vast majority of our teenagers are sound, intelligent kids who give the police their backing."

Roger Benn, chairman of the West Yorkshire Police Federation, said that an appeal against the assault conviction was "still under review".

Santa gets police escort after attack

By ALAN HAMILTON

SANTA CLAUS and his elves have been given police protection after being attacked by stone-throwing youths in the back streets of a mining town in Tyne and Wear.

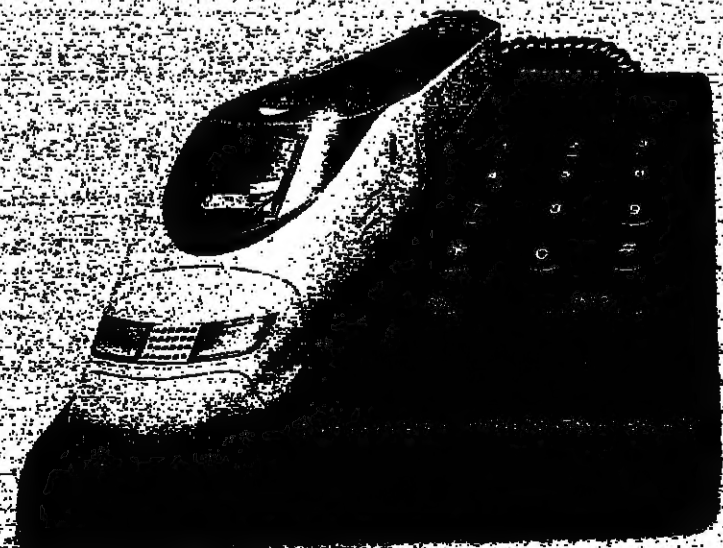
Children as young as ten shouted "fat bastard" and threw stones and beer cans at the familiar figure in red robe and white beard, accompanied by helpers in green tights and pointed ears, drove around Moorsley and Hetton-le-Hole, between Sunderland and Durham City, attempting to bestow seasonal cheer and goodwill by playing Christmas carols from the back of his sleigh.

In future Mr Claus, who in this instance was played by Tony Wilkinson, a supply teacher and member of Hetton Rotary Club, will be accompanied by a police of-

ficer and two part-time special constables.

Police were called when Mr Claus's sleigh — a heavily decorated Land Rover — was surrounded by youths who tried to overturn it as he and his companions proffered collecting-buckets to raise money for local charities. Mr Wilkinson was hit on the leg by a missile and left badly shaken by the attack. A police spokesman said: "Santa just had to sit there ho-ho-hoing because the nice children don't want to see him raise a fist in anger, even if he is badly provoked."

Sunderland police had assigned an officer to the Santa patrol, but on the night in question he was called away to other duties. Mr Wilkinson has now declined to venture out again without more serious protection than elves.



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Conservative MP awarded £40,000 over accusation of betraying Clegg

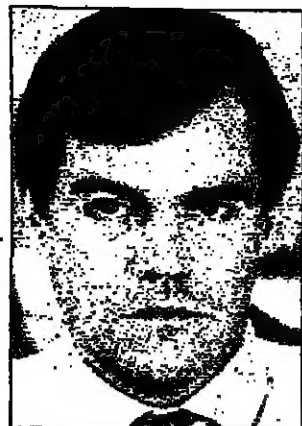
Tories' new spin doctor co-wrote libellous story

By NICHOLAS WOOD
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

CHARLES LEWINGTON, the new media chief at Conservative Central Office, suffered the embarrassment of being involved in a £40,000 libel award to a Tory MP yesterday.

Peter Bottomley, husband of Virginia, the National Heritage Secretary, had sued Express Newspapers over a story accusing him of betraying Private Lee Clegg, the jailed paratrooper, by appearing on the same platform as Martin McGuinness, a Sinn Féin leader. Mr Lewington, who then worked for the *Sunday Express*, was one of three authors of the article, headed "The Final Betrayal" published in January. He took up his new post last Thursday after being headhunted by Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman.

Mr Bottomley, a former Northern Ireland Minister, said after winning the award



Lewington: played down involvement

in the High Court: "It would have been possible to have avoided this writ if we had come to some agreement earlier on. I don't mind robust criticism or even vulgar criticism but this stopped me doing what I have devoted my life to — ending the violence in Northern Ireland."

Mr Lewington played down

the verdict, pointing out that he had not been named as a defendant. He said: "My role in the case was peripheral. I was not called as a witness."

But a senior Labour official commented: "Dr Mawhinney will be hoping that Charles's political judgment is rather better."

Thomas Shields, QC, who represented the MP, had told the hearing that Mr Bottomley had been "shocked and horrified" when he read the article, which linked his sharing of a platform with Mr McGuinness and the failure to free Private Clegg, who at that time was in jail for shooting a joyrider in Northern Ireland.

The 51-year-old MP for Eltham had told the court he was prepared to talk to two *Sunday Express* journalists at his Surrey home. He had explained he did not see any link with his decision to appear at the meeting and the failure of the House of Lords action to free Private Clegg. Mr Lewington was not one of the two journalists. The article

which appeared the following day did not contain one reference to his remarks to the journalists on why he attended the meeting on behalf of his peace group, New Dialogue.

George Carman, QC, representing Express Newspapers and Brian Hitchen, then editor of the *Sunday Express*, said the article was fair comment on matters of great public interest.

Justin Walford, legal adviser to Express Newspapers, which were also ordered to pay the estimated £250,000 costs of the eight-day case, said the company was considering an appeal because of the questions raised over press freedom.

A statement from the peace group New Dialogue said: "Peter Bottomley's principled stand against paramilitary violence — and any illegitimate use of force in Northern Ireland and more widely — deserves wide respect. So does his decision to stand up to the innuendo and inaccuracies of some tabloid journalism."



Bottomley: attended meeting for peace group

Parents of murdered girl appeal for help

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE family of a 16-year-old schoolgirl, murdered as she walked home from a pantomime, appealed yesterday for help in finding her killer.

Police believe Mhairi Julyan was the victim of a sex attack. She is believed to have been strangled and badly beaten. Her attacker is likely to have been heavily bloodstained.

The dead girl's father, Philip Julyan, 46, supported by his wife Maureen, 46, and his 21-year-old daughter Claire, held back tears as he said: "Just come forward and let the police know. We've got to find out. We must."

Mhairi was murdered as she walked home from the *Sleeping Beauty* pantomime at the Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock, on Saturday night. Her body was found in undergrowth near the Stagecoach bus depot 150 yards from her home on Sunday at 3pm.

Detective Chief Inspector Bob Lauder of Strathclyde Police said there was "a very real possibility" that the killer had local knowledge.

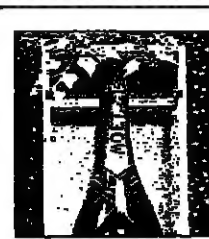
CHRISTMAS STARTS HERE



FRIDAY IN THE TIMES

Win a year's worth of supermarket shopping PLUS David Sinclair on the best of Britpop

SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



A Methuselah of Moët & Chandon to the solver of our jumbo crossword — and 36 magnams to be won in Weekend PLUS End-of-year quiz in the Magazine

Christmas adds up to £7bn extra spending

By ROBIN YOUNG

BRITONS spend £7 billion a year on Christmas, about £130 for every man, woman and child. The calculation has been made by the market analysts Mintel, who gathered the figures from industry estimates of the extra sales generated at Christmas.

Mintel says the country spends more than £1 billion on purely Christmas items: £45 million is spent on Christmas lights, £30 million on crackers, £268 million on cards, £85 million on Christmas stamps, and £150 million on gift wrappings. Christmas confectionery novelties net another £60 million.

A total of £4 billion — equivalent to £75 a person — goes on presents and the population spends a total of £1 billion more on alcohol and tobacco than at other times of the year. Christmas food and groceries involve an extra expense of £250 million, the analysts reckon, but that is alleviated by the cheapness of frozen turkey, a Christmas staple much cheaper than the food families usually eat.

The researchers estimate that an extra expense three times as large goes on entertainment and eating out, which claims an additional £750 million over the period.

Uncertainties about the economy have made older shoppers cautious, according to Mintel. The analysts said that a poll of 1,600 consumers showed that "older people" seemed determined to be "gloomy". Christmas has been saved, analysts feel, by younger consumers, who were more likely to feel optimistic and spend more freely.

Reliant car plant lays off workers

The future of the Reliant Robin, the three-wheeled car, was looking bleak last night after more than 100 workers were laid off. Emergency talks were held between executives at the factory in Tamworth, Staffordshire, and management from the parent company, the Tewkesbury-based avionics company Avonex. Reliant was rescued from receivership earlier this year.

The new management is hoping to find a lucrative market in America for a new battery-operated electric model of the car, favoured by the television character "Del Boy" Trotter of *Only Fools and Horses*.

Canal death

A partygoer who was pulled from a canal drowned when he jumped in again for a joke while his rescuer answered his mobile telephone. Paul Phoenix, 24, had been at a pub in Brierley Hill, West Midlands, with workmates.

Council rapped

The local government ombudsman has recommended that Lambeth council in south London pay £18,000 to a man and his seven children who were moved 34 times in five years to different bed and breakfast accommodation.

Wrong track

New timetables for Reading to Slough trains say the 8.52am Sunday service will terminate at Outer Mongolia. Great Western Trains said typists had used the words to remind them to check information, but forgot to delete them.

Divine intervention aids clamped driver

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE true spirit of Christmas saved a motorist stranded by wheel clamps outside York Minster yesterday.

Adrian Keefe, a surveyor from Worcester, could find no one to help when he found he had no money for the release fee. He had left his credit cards and cheque book at home but the clampers would not listen, the police said it was nothing to do with them and even his hotel refused a loan.

Mr Keefe sought help inside the Minster and found a Good Samaritan in the shape of Canon Glyn Webster, who had just finished a carol service. Mr Webster paid the £50 clampers' fee himself.



Canon Webster: paid the clampers' £50 fee

saying that he was acting in the spirit of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer: "They reel to and fro and stagger like drunken men and are at their wit's end. So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble He delivereth them out of their distress."

Yesterday Mr Keefe, who had been helping his teenage daughter to check degree courses at York University, said: "The Church was the only place I could turn to. Everyone else ignored my pleas." The clampers, SM Security Services of York, declined to accept his watch as security. His hotel, which was next to the waste ground in Monk Bar where he had parked, rejected the idea of his wife paying for two rooms by credit card over the telephone if she was not going to use them.

Mr Keefe said: "I was at my wit's end. When the Canon loaned me the money I went to the hotel and told them I'd managed to find one Christian in York. It's just disgusting what happened." He said he would be reimbursing Mr Webster.

Canon Webster said: "The way the clamped driver was handled it was inhumane." No one from the company was available for comment last night.

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APPEAL FOR THE CHILDREN OF BOSNIA

Could you send a better gift this Christmas?

Disinfectant, nappies, washing materials — not the first things to spring to mind when you think about buying presents this Christmas. But for mothers in Bosnia who have almost nothing left with which to care for their children, these basic essentials mean the world. And they can be found in each baby box sent with a donation in Britain to a despairing mother in Bosnia, via British charity Feed the Children.

A peace in Bosnia is trumpeted in the corridors of power, a young mother sheltering in a tractor cabin in north-west Bosnia knows what the really important issue is tonight: how to keep her shivering and vulnerable toddler safe from disease and infection in appalling conditions and biting cold.

She has been living on the edge of life, since October, when she was forced to flee her home in Velika Kladusa — with only five minutes to pack a carrier bag — and huddle with 22,000 other people along five kilometres of road in Klupjensko valley.

She is one of 14,000 mothers in Bosnia and Croatia who have received baby boxes full of the basic essentials they need to help protect their children from the filthy conditions in which they are surviving: clean nappies and baby cream to soothe burning nappy rash, soap to wash urine-soaked babygros and dirty nappies, antiseptic for cuts, disinfectant for the muddy floors of their shelters...



Children in Bosnia and Croatia have suffered enough. You can help them recover.

From me to you and your child

Inside each box, packed by volunteers at Feed the Children's aid supply centre in Reading, is a message from the person who made it possible. For the exhausted, often traumatised woman who receives it, it is a potent sign that somewhere, somebody is thinking of her, and her efforts to protect her child.

"It's like a voice breaking through the isolation and hope-

lessness surrounding these mothers and children, saying 'we know how hard it is for you, we care what happens to you,'" explains Gaynor Jones, Volunteer Co-ordinator at Feed the Children. "They take it very personally."

"I wanted to send some love with all the practical things in a baby box."

So do the individuals who take up Feed the Children's invitation to send a message along with their £30 donation. "Seeing those mothers in Bosnia on the television, clinging to their children for dear life in appalling conditions, I wanted to do more than send a donation," says Karin Weatherup, who has sent a baby box. "I wanted to send a message. I wanted to say to the mother opening the box, 'You're doing an amazing job, and my family think about you every night'. Feed the Children enabled me to do that, for which I'm very grateful."

Julie Griffin was drawn to the idea of sending a baby box to Bosnia for the same reason. "I just wanted to send some love with all the practical



Despite the Dayton peace initiative, mothers and young children in Bosnia trying to rebuild their lives need even the most basic essentials to succeed.



A message from you this Christmas would mean so much to a Bosnian mother.

things in a baby box. It was that personal involvement which really appealed to me."

Does peace in Bosnia make a difference?

In many areas of Bosnia, peace simply means that the shooting has stopped. But the problem is that whole communities have been chased from their homes, and are either too afraid to return or will find only a scorched patch of earth or bombed-out shell where their home used to be.

"There are many truly lost people," says Stewart Crocker, Deputy Director at Feed the Children. "We must ensure they are not forgotten amidst the news of the Dayton peace initiative. Their needs are tremendous, especially those of the mothers and young children. They are trying to move forward, trying to rebuild their lives."

"People in Britain can take one major worry from these mothers by giving them what they need to care for their little ones — a Feed the Children baby box."

It costs £30 to send a baby box to a Bosnian mother and baby. If you would like to send one — or more, please call 0990 600610 or complete and return the coupon below.

If you would also like to send a message to a Bosnian mother, please enclose it with your donation and Feed the Children will put it inside your baby box.

Call 0990 600610 now to tell us how many baby boxes you would like to send. OR please complete and return this form. Please send _____ baby box(es) at £30 each on my behalf.

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ (total amount) made payable to Feed the Children.

OR Please debit £ _____ from my ☐ Visa ☐ Access ☐ Switch

Card number

Last three digits of Switch card no. Switch issue no.

Expiry date /

Signature

Name (caps)

Address

Postcode

Telephone

If you would like to send a message to a Bosnian mother, please send it with this form and we will put it in your baby box. Please send to: Feed the Children, Dept. 418, FREEPOST, Reading RG1 1BR.



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Constables win libel damages from BBC

By A Staff Reporter

TWO policemen who sued the BBC over a *Panorama* programme they said portrayed them as racists won libel damages yesterday.

In a unanimous verdict returned after nearly seven hours of deliberation, a High Court jury awarded PC Christopher Wright £12,500 and PC Peter Callaghan £4,000. The BBC was also ordered to pay the costs of the case, unofficially estimated at £200,000.

The officers were not named in the programme in April 1991, called *Race Hate UK*, but said they were identifiable to colleagues and the public in east London.

Lord Williams of Mostyn, QC, for the officers, told Mr Justice Curran and the jury that the BBC programme, seen by 2.8 million viewers, portrayed them as racist officers who arrested an Asian shopkeeper — later acquitted of assaulting a white customer — for no reason other than his race and colour. "That is a lie," Lord Williams said. "They were two constables carrying out their duty, which is not always easy and not always simple." Their reputations were seriously damaged and their feelings greatly hurt.

The BBC denied libel and pleaded fair comment, saying that the officers were not identifiable from the programme, and that it did not accuse them of being racist.

'Ultimate detective job' for philosopher-policeman likened to Morse

Anti-terrorist commander leads fight for poetic justice

FROM STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A WATERCOLOURIST with a taste for Chinese philosophy and American Civil War history was yesterday named as Britain's new national anti-terrorist co-ordinator.

Commander John Grieve, currently director of criminal intelligence at Scotland Yard, will take command of the Yard's anti-terrorist branch SO13 in February and oversee investigations across the country.

Colleagues regard the 49-year-old philosophy and psychology graduate as a shrewd but unconventional policeman. He has been compared to Colin Dexter's cerebral Inspector Morse — he shares a taste for poetry and quotation with the fictional Oxford detective, but is more likely to quote modern American novelists than the Greek classics. Also, he prefers rock and roll to opera.

He studied the American Civil War campaigns in detail for lessons on fighting crime,

and believes the campaign against the Apaches in the 1880s could teach policemen how to deal with Britain's criminals. He is not afraid to be controversial. Eighteen months ago he told chief constables the time might now have arrived to consider licensing drug dealers.

Mr Grieve is a weekend painter whose heroes include Whistler. Instead of sending postcards to friends, he gives sketches of places he visits on official duties. On Saturdays he forsakes work for painting classes. His favourite authors include Dostoevsky and Beckett and he is fond of the sayings of Joseph Fourier, Napoleon's chief of intelligence.

After the Yard announced his appointment, Mr Grieve quoted from a speech by Seamus Heaney, the Nobel prize-winning Irish poet, saying: "By its very nature, the atrocious is always with us. We should be prepared for the worst and hope for the best."



Commander John Grieve will head a staff of 97 handling terrorist investigations across the country

He said his new post was "the ultimate detective job — I am pleased to be doing it. It is obviously an extremely worthwhile job."

He takes over a staff of 97 from Commander David Tucker, who is becoming head of security with the supermarket chain Sainsbury. Mr Grieve will assume command at a time when the IRA ceasefire has held for more than a year and his officers will be concentrating on new work. This already

includes animal liberation groups and the rise of violence linked to political extremism.

Officers are studying fundamentalists' campaigns in Paris, poison attacks on the Tokyo underground railway and the Oklahoma bombing, for any possible lessons for the British scene.

The appointment of Mr Grieve is seen as an indication that police in Britain accept that the threat from terrorism will continue, what-

ever happens in Northern Ireland.

Mr Grieve is the son of a Newcastle accountant. A policeman for 30 years, he started on the beat in Clapham and went to Newcastle University where his degree theses included one on football fans and their ability to pick up the beat of chants.

He commanded Bethnal Green in the East End of London, and is also an expert on the crimes of Jack the Ripper. He has risen before

dawn to take part in Flying Squad raids and became a Master of Philosophy at Cranfield. He drew up key guidelines on informers, and this year defended the handling of a Yardie informer who was discovered to be involved in armed robbery.

His friends say that one of his favourite quotations is a line from a book by Cormac McCarthy about poverty in the Deep South. The line reads: "There are dragons in the wings of the world."

Subsidy fraud by farmers tops £8m

By NIGEL WILLIAMSON
WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH farmers and food producers cheated the common agricultural policy out of more than £8.7 million last year.

The amount of detected fraud has nearly doubled in two years, according to a report yesterday by the National Audit Office on the CAP's Intervention Board, which pays farmers to encourage production or to guarantee prices for products such as beef. Detected fraud in 1992 totalled £4.5 million.

Cases included:
□ Beef intended as food aid for Romania which ended up on a market stall in Romford, east London. As a result regulations were introduced to make it an offence for unauthorised recipients of surplus food to sell it.
□ Seventy-two tons of beef for which CAP intervention funding was claimed but which originated in South America.
□ A dairy farmer who sold milk in excess of his quota allocation for four years without declaring the production. He received a heavy fine.

The audit office has recommended a series of measures to enable the Intervention Board to detect fraud more systematically. The board has introduced a free telephone service to allow informers to disclose suspected irregularities.

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Ice proves greater peril than bullets



KATE ADIE has survived bullets and shrapnel in the war zones of the world without, so far as it is known, suffering serious injury, but she has now been forced to return home after fracturing an ankle when falling on ice in former Yugoslavia.

More than a million people in Britain fall on ice each year. The fractures from which they suffer depend, to some extent, on their age but in general the collar bone, wrist, lower part of the forearm, ankles and hips are most at risk.

Kate Adie was unlucky. Most people who twist their ankles when they fall suffer no more than an inversion sprain, an injury particularly likely to be suffered by those whose ankles tend to turn inwards when they relax and who wear out the outermost part of their shoes. These patients tend to twist their ankles when they lose their balance, and in some cases fall so heavily that they fracture the bones around the ankle.

Percival Pott, an 18th-century surgeon at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, was the first to describe fracture dislocations of the ankle, but his description was less than precise and it is uncertain whether he was describing a break in both the bones of the

lower leg, the tibia and the fibula, at the ankle or merely a break in the smaller of the two bones, the fibula, which is more common, with a displacement of the ankle bone beneath it.

The main ankle joint, with subsidiary joints in the small bones beneath it, is a complex system capable of multiple movements and linked by strong ligaments which either snap or, if they hold, detach pieces from the main bony structures when subjected to abnormal strains.

A serious fracture of the ankle joint may involve months of disability, and later osteoarthritis of the joint. Even a simple one usually means six to eight weeks in plaster although it is possible to shorten this if surgeons can screw the jigsaw together.

Winter will also bring many breaks to the upper limb. Most elderly people, as they fall, will sustain a Colles' fracture, a break to the lower portion of the bone in the forearm, but young and fit will break the scaphoid in the wrist, and adolescents will fracture their collar bones. The Queen should always be proud that when she fell she fractured her scaphoid, an injury more common in those 40 years her junior.

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Aristocrat faked burglary at country estate where presidents and princes gathered

Brocket faces prison for £4.5m insurance swindle

BY RICHARD DUCE

LORD BROCKET, a polo-playing friend of the Prince of Wales, is facing a prison sentence after admitting his part in a £4.5 million insurance fraud involving his collection of classic cars.

The Old Etonian and former Army officer looked worried in the dock at Luton Crown Court yesterday as Judge Rodwell, QC, adjourned his case for pre-sentencing reports.

The judge told Brocket, owner of the 5,000-acre Brockton Hall estate in Hertfordshire: "I want to make it clear that by ordering a pre-sentencing report it doesn't mean you are going to receive anything other than a custodial sentence." Brocket, 43, was told the length of his sentence would be determined by what was in the reports. Brocket, who inherited the estate at the age of 13, was charged as Charles Ronald Nall-Cain.

He appeared in the dock with an employee, Stephen Gwyther, 40, a mechanic, of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire; Richard Furtado, 41, a classic car salesman, also of Welwyn Garden City; and Michael Campbell-Bowling, 59, a financial consultant, of Fulham, west London. All four men were charged with conspiracy to defraud, alleging that between May 17, 1989, and September 1, 1994, they conspired together and with a fifth man, Mark Caswell, another employee of Brocket, to defraud such persons as could be induced to part with money.

Brocket and Gwyther pleaded guilty to the charge, but Mr Furtado and Mr Campbell-Bowling denied the offence.



Lady Brocket was given a divorce in September

Peter Stage, for the prosecution, then asked Judge Rodwell for 14 days so that a decision could be reached on whether it was in the public interest to proceed with a trial against Mr Furtado and Mr Campbell-Bowling.

The prosecution against Brocket, whose stately home has been used as a film backdrop, followed his claim that there had been a burglary at in May 1991. He had said that four high-value classic cars had been stolen from a showroom on the estate at Lemsford. The cars were a 1952 Ferrari 340 America, a 1955 Ferrari Europe, a Ferrari 195 Sport and a 1960 Maserati Tipo Bird Cage. His entire collection had once been valued at £20 million.

He had incurred huge debts after the house was transformed into a conference centre with a golf course in the grounds.

At the time, Brocket, a father of three, told the press that the thieves had carried out a "professional job" by removing the alarm system. In February this year he was arrested and accused of at-

tempting to deceive his insurers.

After the hearing, Steven Barker, his solicitor, said: "He has pleaded guilty and he has had to live with that decision for some time. He is prepared to go to prison but he is far more concerned with the welfare of his children. It is a sad and unfortunate case."

Brocket's ancestry can be traced back to 5th-century Irish kings. His grandfather bought a baronetcy in 1921. The family motto is The Cat Stroked is Meek.

The Georgian family house was once the home of Viscount Melbourne, Prime Minister during the 1830s, and is where the waltz is said to have been introduced to England.

In the 1980s, after it became a conference centre, Margaret Thatcher, as Prime Minister, greeted Presidents Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush there.

Brocket hired out the hall with its 48 bedrooms and 30 bathrooms for up to £25,000 a day while the family moved

into a smaller house on the estate.

Brocket married Isabell Lorenzo, an international model, in Las Vegas in 1982, and they became society's golden couple. He was seen as the dashing aristocrat, she the beautiful heiress; her father was a Cuban businessman who made a fortune in half-point pens. As a model, she had earned £10,000 a week.

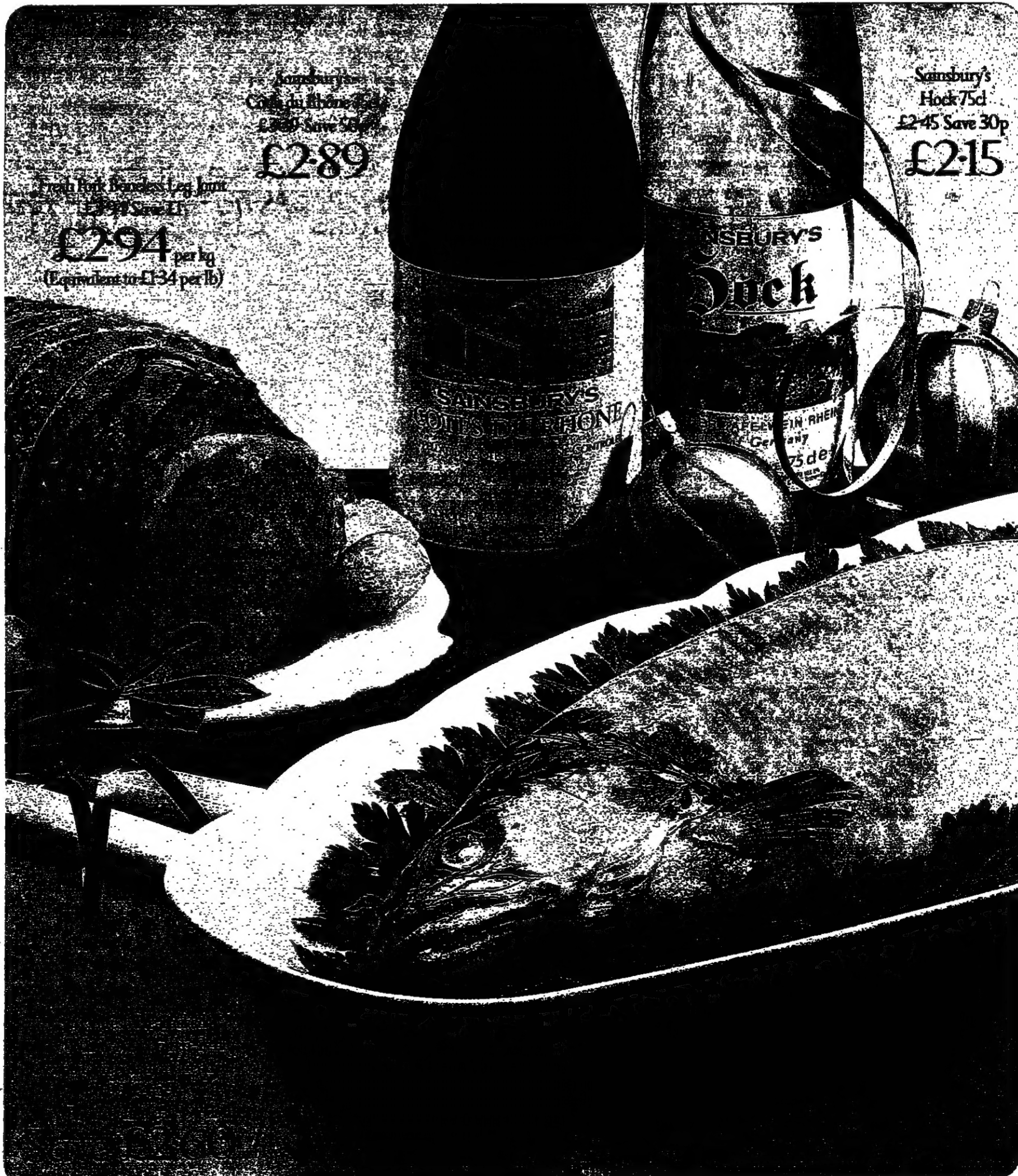
The marriage became troubled. Lady Brocket reportedly made two suicide attempts and was treated for a nervous breakdown. She sought a divorce on the ground of her husband's unreasonable behaviour. It was granted by the High Court in September.

Yesterday, the judge adjourned the case for 28 days and all four men were granted bail. Brocket is on £30,000 bail and his surety was said to be flying in from America to sign the papers today. The judge ordered that Brocket should be arrested unless the surety was signed in 24 hours.



Lord Brocket's classic-car collection was once valued at £20 million. Yesterday he admitted conspiracy to defraud

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Passer-by tried to help man with car bomb

A PASSER-BY offered to give a lift to a man planting a home-made bomb under the car of a friend who had been having an affair with his wife.

Robert Graham, a television engineer, was lying on his back under the Mercedes belonging to John Hall when the passer-by asked if he needed any help.

"He thought I was working under the car and offered to give me a hand and that was when I panicked," Graham told a jury at Manchester Crown Court. He said he shoved the "bomb", made from three fireworks and a bag of petrol, into a crevice under the car while it was parked in a dimly lit street and hurriedly left the scene.

Graham said, however, that he never expected the device to explode and wanted it to be discovered so that his wife's lover would "go through the same mental anguish as me". He said: "The affair had gnawed away at me day after day. My intention was to frighten him and get it out of my system."

Graham denies making the explosive device with intent to endanger life but admits a bomb hoax charge. The prosecution alleges that Graham, 45, from Royton, Greater Manchester, made the bomb in revenge after he discovered that his wife of 23 years, Lorraine, had been having an affair with Mr Hall, their next-door neighbour.

The bomb was found when the car went for a service. Mechanics fled in panic and called Army bomb disposal experts. The trial continues.

Private eye slipped up on video assignment

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A PRIVATE detective's blunder cost Britain's biggest brewer dearly when he tried to videotape a woman the company suspected was claiming damages dishonestly.

The detective was sent to shadow Christine Macdonald, 35, who was injured after slipping on a cellar hatch outside one of its pubs. His film showed her bustling round stores, lifting heavy shopping, and driving her car.

But when Scottish & Newcastle Breweries showed the recording to the mother of five from Middlesbrough on the eve of the court hearing of her negligence claim, she told them: "That's not me." Now the company has agreed an out of court settlement of about £15,000.

Mrs Macdonald slipped on the wet, moss-covered wooden cellar hatch in 1990, damaging her knee. She had to give up work as a care assistant and suffered pain when walking far. She is about to have a carbon implant.

The woman mistaken for Mrs Macdonald was filmed driving to her smart semi-detached home to unload shopping. The real Mrs Macdonald cannot walk fast because of her injury, does not drive, lives in a terraced council house and is unable to lift anything heavy.

She said yesterday: "Their barrister's face was a picture when we pointed out they had filmed the wrong woman... It was obviously not me."

Scottish & Newcastle Breweries declined to comment.

Sack awaits worker for night on the tiles

HIGH-FLYERS who responded to an advertisement for an international logistics director found themselves with faces as red as Rudolph's nose yesterday (Paul Wilkinson writes).

The job, based in "the Arctic Circle corridor" required an applicant able to deal with a "mid-winter peak in demand" from a "youthful global customer base".

Those thirtysomethings fluent in corporate-speak fazed off their CVs... only to find they had been hoaxed in a festive joke by a Newcastle management consultancy firm, CPCR. The advert, which appeared in the city's evening paper, was how the company envisaged today's

human resources departments would draw up a job description for the post of Santa Claus.

Applicants had to be experts at planning and slick distribution "because the entire year's output has to be delivered in just one night". Despite more clues — like unusual corporate transport and the need to be "hairy, and have a jolly, gregarious, interpersonal style and an inside knowledge of chimneys" — some people sent genuine applications.

Mike Cockburn, a consultant with CPCR, said: "We had quite a response. I think most people thought it was a wind-up but there were a few who were caught out."

'Defective regime is wrecking fishing industry'

By Alice Thomson and James Landale

THE common fisheries policy is the diktar of Brussels bureaucrats and their political apparatchiks, Christopher Gill told MPs yesterday.

Mr Gill, the Euro-sceptic MP for Ludlow, said that it was failing to protect fishing stocks, alienating public opinion, making criminals of honest people and encouraging short-term exploitation at the expense of genuine conservation. It was also "perpetuating the situation in which a vital British interest is compromised by the process of qualified majority voting".

Speaking in yesterday's Commons debate, he argued that the Government's case against withdrawal from the policy hung on three points: the time it would take to negotiate satisfactory bilateral agreements with other countries, the absence of strong objections to the policy in the past, and legal problems associated with disengagement.

"I trust that the whole House will recognise that none of these is sufficient in itself to justify the perpetuation of a regime which is so obviously defective in that it is precipitating the demise of the British fishing industry."

Opening the debate, Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, told the 17 Tory supporters of an amendment calling for a withdrawal from the common fisheries policy that if they voted with Labour — "a bunch of sell-out merchants" — they risked compromising everything, including the respect of British fishermen. Labour's amendment was "simply a squalid exercise in synthetic patriotism by

those whose sole objective is to try to entice some Tories to withhold their support from the Government".

Later, the Government tried to win back the support of Tory MPs with fishing constituencies by announcing the reinstatement of a £12 million capital grant scheme for English harbours that was cut in the Budget. The Harbour Grant scheme and the Marketing and Processing scheme — both worth £2 million a year each until 1998 — were cut despite protests by Tory MPs in the South West.

However, the Euro-sceptics still accused the Government of selling out to Brussels by allowing Spanish boats into UK waters from January 1. Sir Richard Body (C, Holland with Boston), the remaining "whipless" Euro-rebel, said British fishermen had no confidence in their future, especially after the renegotiation of the fisheries policy in 2002. "They have no idea what will happen to them."

Rupert Allason (C, Torbay).



Gill: attack on Brussels diktat

said the Foreign Office had made too many compromises to Brussels. He told Mr Baldry, who will be in Brussels on Thursday: "I urge you, I beg you, fight for Britain's interests — because if you don't, no one else will, certainly not the Foreign Office."

John Wilkinson (C, Ruislip and Northwood) said: "The CFP is a busted flush and we should have no further part of it. If we had a 200-mile limit it would be far more effective and if we fail to conserve the fault will only be ours."

Sir Edward Heath said that a common fisheries policy was needed to conserve European fish stocks. "The Government is quite right to pursue that endeavour. And it can be done successfully."

The former Prime Minister, who rejected a Euro-sceptic claim that he was a "traitor" to his country. He urged potential Tory rebels: "You owe your constituents not only your energy but also your judgment. Is it your judgment tonight that this is an event and a matter which justifies you in defeating this Government? That is the crucial question which you've got to answer."

For Labour, Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, accused the Government of failing to represent the British fishing industry in Europe. "It is utterly unacceptable that we should be decommissioning vessels to facilitate additional fishing opportunities around the UK for the fishing industry of one of our European partners. The priority must be to conserve our stocks."



Cricket facing US challenge

By Arthur Leathley, Political Correspondent

MALCOLM RIFKIND yesterday inspired dreams of England's cricketers beating the West Indies in a Test series, a feat last accomplished in 1969.

The Foreign Secretary accepted that devotion to cricket among youngsters in the Caribbean is being eroded by the growing domination of American sports there.

Jim Lester, Tory MP for Broxtowe, complained to Mr Rifkind that the BBC World Service's Test match coverage is being sidelined by the success of the US broadcaster

CNN. "We need to look very carefully at the way we can preserve the Commonwealth culture, particularly for young people," he said. "When they start playing basketball and baseball instead of cricket in the West Indies, you know something's going wrong."

Mr Rifkind replied: "I very strongly agree with you."

Mr Lester, who recently made a fact-finding visit to the Caribbean with members of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, joined other Tories to press for greater funding of BBC World Service

radio and television to boost British influence. "In the Caribbean, virtually every input into that society is American," he said. "They can't even watch the Commonwealth Games on television."

Mr Rifkind said that the planned £5.4 million, or 20 per cent, cut in Foreign Office funding next year would not harm the World Service's broadcasting output. "Our admiration for the World Service should not lead us to assume they are to be insulated from the normal rigours of financial discipline."

No safe bets on Major's election date decision

In hindsight, general elections always seem to have been held on the only possible day. Beforehand, there is often enormous uncertainty. A wide variety of possible dates is usually considered by the Prime Minister of the day.

Margaret Thatcher called the 1983 and 1987 elections in each case with a year to go in the life of the Parliaments, only after virtually being pushed into the announcement by her advisers. Of course, she wanted to bind the Cabinet to the decision, but she also wanted to consider all options in exhaustive discussion.

John Major was the same. April 9 now looks the ideal date for his 1997 victory, after the legislation approving the council tax had been approved by Parliament and after Norman Lamont had produced his Budget with a 20p starting rate of income tax. But in *Too Close To Call*, Sarah Hogg and Jonathan Hill reveal how a series of dates was considered, from late spring 1991 onwards. There was even talk, quickly dismissed, of recalling Parliament on December 27 so as to hold an election on January 23. Almost every other Thursday from then onwards was debated.

The choice in 1996-97 is equally complicated. The options are viewed in a note by Andrew Lansley, former head of the Conservative Research Department, and Paul Wheeler, Labour's elections co-ordinator until a month ago, of the Public Policy Unit, a firm of political consultants. As I argued last Thursday, the Tories are unlikely to be forced into an early election as a result of further by-election losses removing their majority. Governments can survive for some time without an overall majority, especially since it does not look in the interests of the Ulster Unionists to exchange their influence over Mr Major for a majority Labour government.

Mr Lansley and Mr Wheeler identify five possible dates: October 10 next year (after the holidays, but avoiding the party conferences); November 14

(launched on the back of the Tory conference); December 12 (after an early tax-cutting Budget); April 4, 1997 (coinciding with the first date when Budget tax changes take effect); and May 1 (which the authors note is "the preferred date among Conservatives generally and the party organisation"). The latter date would follow the first full month of implementation of tax changes and coincide with the county council elections.

The Tory party organisation and the manifesto will be ready from next summer. But the only argument for one of the 1996 dates is if the Tories manage a dramatic recovery in the opinion polls, narrowing the gap with Labour to a single figure, and also if there is a favourable political background provided by, say, a breakthrough in the Northern Ireland peace talks or by the European inter-governmental conference. All these look long shots. There is no evidence yet of any sustained pick up in Tory poll ratings. Moreover, as the psephologist Robert Waller has pointed out, the Tories face very big losses in the council elections next May, probably more than half the seats they are defending, since comparison will be with the very good Tory results in the elections fought a month after the 1992 general election.

As Lansley and Wheeler argue, Mr Major will face a dilemma in the early autumn of next year about whether to take the political initiative for an election. In 1978-79, James Callaghan waited, and Labour probably did worse as a result. In 1991-92, Mr Major was cautious, and was justified. But he has been bold, notably in forcing the leadership issue six months ago. My money is still on 1997, and May 1, but Mr Major will still have plenty of earlier dates pencilled into his diary.

PETER RIDDELL

Only eight more unitary authorities backed

By Ian Murray

THE commission in charge of redrawing the map of shire England recommended the creation of only eight more unitary councils yesterday, dashing John Gummer's hopes of a radical change in local government.

The eight are the only ones approved from a list of 21 sent to the Local

Government Commission in June by the Environment Secretary. He was so disappointed then with the low number of unitary authorities recommended by the commission that he sacked its chairman, Sir John Banham, and ordered his replacement, Sir David Cooksey, to do another review.

If Parliament accepts these final recommendations only 46 unitary

authorities will be established and services for almost half the population will continue to be administered by the old two-tier system. The eight are Blackburn, Blackpool, the merged Kent towns of Rochester and Gillingham, Halton and Warrington in Cheshire, Peterborough, Thurrock in Essex and The Wrekin in Shropshire. Among those rejected were Exeter,

Norwich, Gloucester and Northampton, which ran their own affairs for centuries before being absorbed into their counties by the 1974 local government review. Frank Dobson, Shadow Environment Secretary, said he was profoundly disappointed that the county towns had lost their case, adding: "The whole process of local government reorganisation has been a mess."

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to environment ministers and the Prime Minister; debate on the common fisheries policy; in the Lords: debate on the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Bill, committee stage. TODAY in the Commons: backbench debates on the proposed international passenger station at Stratford, east London; schools in Broadstairs; the future of Knockhill race track; Scottish questions will be followed by a debate on the Humber Bridge (Debate) Bill, all stages. In the Lords: debate on the increase in litigation and consequences for the professions; the case for a statutory provision on cheque-book journalists; the Western European Time Bill.

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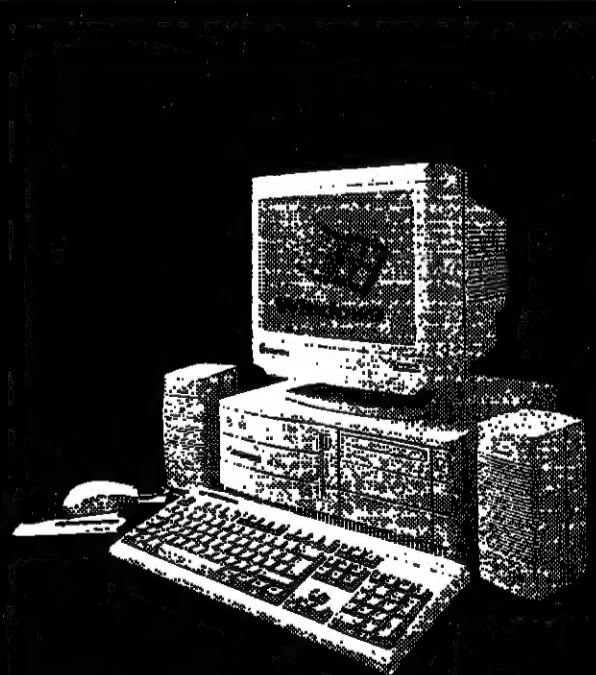


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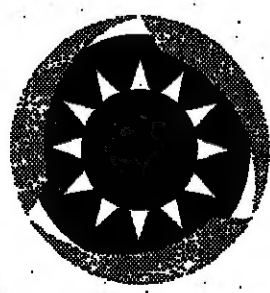
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هَذَا مِنَ الْأَصْلِ

BAILLEYS

Burden of Bosnia mission taken up by British general

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

NATO formally takes command of peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina this morning, beginning a unique mission in the alliance's history which includes the objective of withdrawing from former Yugoslavia 365 days from today.

Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, the British officer who will be operational commander of the 60,000 ground troops taking part in the peace implementation mission, arrived in Sarajevo yesterday to prepare for his historic takeover from the United Nations Protection Force (Unprofor).

The transition will be marked this morning at a parade at Sarajevo airport, during which the UN flag will be lowered and the NATO flag will be raised. The most senior NATO officer at today's parade will be Admiral Leighton Smith, the US commander of NATO's Allied Forces Southern

Europe, who will be in overall command of Operation Joint Endeavour, with headquarters in Sarajevo.

General Walker, who will be in day-to-day control of the NATO-led troops, will be based initially in Kiseljak, outside Sarajevo, as commander of NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction



General Walker arrives in Sarajevo yesterday

Corps headquarters, which is running the peace implementation mission.

General Walker, 51, said that NATO had arrived in Bosnia in a "very deliberate and non-aggressive way". He said: "We are here to implement a peace agreement which has been given the consent of the parties here at the very highest level."

As NATO got ready for the peace operation, France last night called for Europe to be given a formal collective voice within a "renovated" NATO alliance, and said the Western European Union (WEU) defence grouping should establish its own military command. The proposals, made by Charles Millon, the French Defence Minister, are likely to be greeted with suspicion by Britain and America.

In Brussels, Javier Solana took over as NATO Secretary-General and pledged to expand the alliance eastwards.



Richard Holbrooke: in his diplomatic swansong, he hopes to repeat his success with the Bosnia peace deal by trying to resolve the ethnic divisions in Cyprus

Wall Street bids for peacemaker

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

RICHARD HOLBROOKE, the aggressive and high-profile American diplomat who negotiated the Bosnia peace agreement signed in Paris last week, is leaving the Clinton Administration, early next year to spend more time with his wife and family in New York, and may return to Wall Street.

Before his resignation, however, the State Department's outspoken Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs will next month devote his intimidating techniques of negotiation to the divided island of Cyprus.

"I will leave early next year, behind my original schedule. I am not walking away. I will leave with total support for this Administration, and the policies I was part of."

Mr Holbrooke, 54, joined the foreign service after he had been turned down for a job on *The New York Times*. His first two marriages failed. His third wife is Kati Marton, a Hungarian-born writer.

It was well known that Mr Holbrooke had become frustrated with Washington bureaucracy soon after his arrival at the State Department

after being US Ambassador to Bonn. But his high-profile appointment as chief negotiator in the Balkans last August appeared to have given him fresh enthusiasm for the highly ambitious diplomat.

An investment banker before joining the Administration, he has been talking to several firms about returning to Wall Street, but expects to spend more time travelling and writing. "My wife worried that I was spending more time with Hris Silajdzic [the Bosnian Prime Minister] than with her," he said.

Rarely popular with colleagues, who resented his heavy-handed approach, Mr Holbrooke is nevertheless credited as the only man capable of bringing the warring presidents of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia to the table at Dayton, Ohio, and twisting their arms enough to initial an accord. The Washington rumour mill says there is talk of a Nobel peace prize.

His replacement is expected to be John Kornblum, who is an arms control expert and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs.

Bosnian refugees dread command to go back home

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

A SKINNY Christmas tree stands in the foyer waiting to be dressed; young men smelling of aftershave and squeezed into Sunday suits stumble down the staircase on their way to a court hearing; girls in plaid skirts talk earnestly to Barbie dolls about their missing fathers.

Refugee centres are full of small, dramatic episodes, and the Lichtenberg house in Berlin, after the signing of the Dayton peace accord, is no exception.

A cheerful German nurse, immunising children, clucks at a nine-year-old girl: "You will be looking forward to going home any day now." To most Bosnians stranded in institutions throughout Europe that smacks of a threat. Slowly the pressure is growing to return those stranded by the Bosnian war.

Four hundred thousand refugees from former Yugoslavia are living in Germany, and some have been here for over three years. More than 300 of them, Bosnian Muslims in the main, are in the rundown Lichtenberg hostel.

Each has a Christmas dilemma. Alina, with a lined face that could make her anything between 26 and 46 years old, came to Berlin from eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina

with her three children. "I watched as my husband was shot right in front of me," she said. The children looked on as she dug his grave. She was given a safe-conduct pass on condition that she made over the house to a Serb.

Thousands of Bosnian Muslims from "ethnically cleansed" areas went through a similar process; Alina knows she is not unique and does not embellish her story. Now she is in trouble: Alina will be in one of the first batches to go back since she has only Serbian identity papers. "They think we are Serbs because we have Serbian passports."

The same problem confronts Bisera from Banja Luka. She had to sign over her house and shop to a Serb family in return for a Serb passport. That did not prevent her internment in a Serb-run camp.

From March 31, refugees from former Yugoslavia will no longer be given special privileges in Germany. They must either apply for political asylum — with a good chance that they will be speedily rejected — or return. The first effect of Dayton has been a rapid increase in refugees from Bosnia, anxious to secure special status before the rules are tightened.

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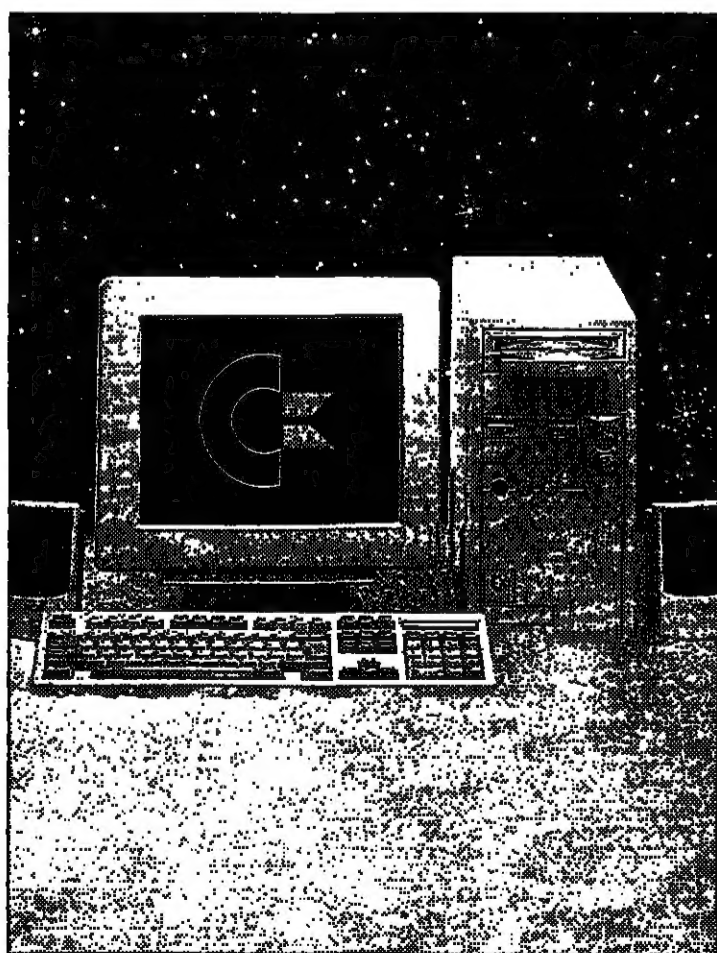
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Rabin video stirs doubts on amateur cameraman

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE first public screening of the only film of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination shocked Israelis last night with its dramatic exposure of appalling security lapses and raised more questions about the filming by a 37-year-old amateur cameraman from Tel Aviv.

In an exclusive interview with *Yediot Aharanot*, which, along with the Channel Two commercial television network, paid nearly \$400,000 (£260,000) for rights to the video, the cameraman was revealed as Ronni Kempler, a civil service accountant and reserve army security officer.

Asked to explain why he had filmed in the darkened parking lot before the shooting took place and why he had let his camera linger on Yigal Amir, the self-confessed assassin, before he shot the Prime Minister, Mr Kempler claimed that even from his rooftop vantage point the man had looked suspicious.

Israelis who read the interview queried why, if that were the case, he had not alerted the security forces at the Tel Aviv peace rally.

old law student, an opponent of the peace process with the Palestinians, sat some of the time on the edge of a flower bed and also loitered unchallenged near the Prime Minister's car.

"At first he looked suspicious to me as he sat by the plants," Mr Kempler said. "He had a prominent nose, there is so much talk about political murder, about attacks — and he looked like a potential killer. Afterwards I told myself that he was probably an undercover policeman, because otherwise the police would have dealt with him."

Mr Kempler's interview increased concern among many Israelis convinced that in some way their much vaunted security services were involved in the assassination. It has already been reported that Mr Amir acted as an Israeli agent abroad and had links with a known agent for the Shin Bet internal security service.

Mr Kempler told *Yediot Aharanot*: "The whole time I had the feeling something bad would happen — there was anxiety in the air. Maybe because in the reserves I deal in security, I am more sensitive to that. Right away, I told myself that it cannot be. There are so many security guards here... The camera shows the security forces as if something is not quite right."

The video shows the gunman stalking Rabin until his outstretched left arm nearly touches the Prime Minister — much closer than he was seen to get during the reconstruction of the crime set up by the police. There are flashes from two shots and the Prime Minister drops to the ground covered by his bodyguards.

Yesterday Mr Amir appeared in the Tel Aviv district court. His trial was adjourned until January 23, when he is expected to be asked to enter a plea. Despite his confession, Mr Amir's lawyers have said that he might not plead guilty.

ידיעות אחרונות

לצח רבין: תעדות הקסמורית

דיועות אחרונות: מפרסם היום פרסום בעדן ראשון של צילומי רצח הממשלה. מתוך סרט הווידאו שתיעד את הרג רבין • הסרט יעודר הערב ב-8 בחדשות ערוץ 2



Yediot Aharanot with a photograph yesterday from Ronni Kempler's video, showing Yigal Amir shooting Yitzhak Rabin in the back and the flash from the gun behind the Israeli Prime Minister's shoulder

Minister's Bethlehem visit called off

Jerusalem: The delayed handover of Bethlehem from Israeli to Palestinian control was further soured yesterday when an argument over security forced the cancellation of an Israeli minister's visit (Christopher Walker writes).

Bethlehem city officials said that Elias Freij, the Christian Mayor, was angered when Israeli security officials ordered all

Arab workers to leave the municipality building before the arrival of Uzi Baram, the Israeli Tourism Minister.

"The meeting was postponed because the behaviour of the security people was unjustified and was humiliating," said Mr Freij. The Mayor had earlier criticised Israel for delaying its withdrawal from December 18 until tomorrow. Israel

claimed that the delay was necessary in order to complete a by-pass road for Jewish settlers who will remain in the occupied West Bank.

Mr Baram later confirmed that Israeli security services had asked for very harsh measures to be taken and said that, since he had no control over the security arrangements, he called off the trip.

China excludes Patten from handover party

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG

PEKING will not permit Chris Patten, the Hong Kong Governor, to participate in the final ceremonies handing the colony back to China on June 30, 1997.

Wang Guisheng, director of Hong Kong Affairs in the Chinese Foreign Ministry, told Joseph Wong, Secretary for Manpower and Education, in Peking last weekend that the final ceremony "is going to be officiated by the British and Chinese Governments: no third party can have a place".

A Chinese official based in the colony said that as "the triple violator" of past British-Chinese agreements, for which Peking has ostracised Mr Patten since 1993, the Governor has created a situation in which his role in the handover ceremony "has always been a contentious one between the two sides".

Peking and London have established a committee to begin formal discussions of the 1997 ceremony, but a senior British official in Hong Kong denied that the matter of the Governor's role had been raised. He noted that the senior officials of the Hong Kong Government would attend the ceremony "in full force" and Mr Patten would play a key role.

"Of course, it's a matter for the two sovereigns," he said. "If the Prince of Wales and the Foreign Secretary were here they would outrank the Governor, but he would clearly be one of the triumvirate."

The matter is likely to be raised by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, when he flies to Peking next month after visiting Hong Kong for three days. "But it's barely worth discussing," said another senior official. "The Chinese position is stupid and absurd. If the Chinese do not want to come to the party on the evening of June 30, they can hold another party of their own some other time."

He believed that this latest insult to Mr Patten is part of a new technique. "They assure senior Hong Kong officials visiting Peking that their future is bright and there is nothing to worry about. Then they attack the Governor."

This was a reference to an event two weeks ago in Peking

when Chen Zuo'er, the deputy director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, told K. C. Kwong, Hong Kong's Treasury Secretary, that Mr Patten was like a reckless Formula One racing driver who could kill all around him. When the Foreign Office summoned the Chinese Ambassador to complain, the embassy issued a statement that it recognised Mr Patten as Britain's minister plenipotentiary in Hong Kong.

Hugh Davies, who represents Britain in negotiations with Peking over Hong Kong, said: "The Governor of Hong Kong is a very important member of the British Government. If there is any dis-

Journalist loses visa

Hong Kong: A German reporter who enraged Li Peng, the Chinese Premier, referring to him as a "dictator", was told yesterday he can no longer work in China (Jonathan Mirsky writes). Henrik Bork, 34, of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, was denied an extension of his journalist's visa. The Bonn Foreign Ministry reported Peking as saying it had never liked his reporting and it had always been negative.

agreement between the two sides on the ceremony. It is on the role of the Governor."

Although there are certain to be further furious British objections to China's slight to Mr Patten, when the handover actually occurs it may be that Mr Patten will be visible but not play an active role in the ceremony. This might accommodate both sides.

The recent renewal of abuse of the Governor is part of a wider pattern of Chinese acts during the past two months, designed to show that Peking regards itself as the de facto master of Hong Kong's destiny. China recently reiterated that the Legislative Council will be suspended on July 1, 1997, and the Bill of Rights emasculated on the same day.

Yemen planes 'buzz' island seized by Eritrea

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A LULL in the confrontation over a small island at the mouth of the Red Sea was broken yesterday when Yemeni planes flew sorties over the island seized last week by Eritrea.

Yemeni MIG and Sukhoi

fighters were reported to be wheeling over Greater Hamish, one of two islands close to the Bab el-Mandab channel at the Red Sea's southern entrance. Eritrea and Yemen both claim sovereignty, and the dispute led to three days of fighting last week that left six Eritrean and three Yemeni soldiers dead.

The Eritreans also claim to have shot down a Yemeni helicopter. A ceasefire was announced on Monday.

The confrontation meant that Yemen, itself racked by civil war last year, was briefly engaged in hostilities on two fronts. Last week Saudi Arabia accused Yemeni tribesmen of resorting to arms in another

clash with Saudi border guards in a disputed area that has led to frequent skirmishes since a full-scale border war 60 years ago.

Eritrea has asked the International Court of Justice to decide ownership of the Greater and Lesser Hamish islands, and accused "troublemakers" of provoking the fighting.

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Rains bring muddy joy to hippos

FROM JINGO GILMORE
IN JOHANNESBURG

FROM hippos at the Kruger National Park to farmers in the Northern Transvaal, the rains sweeping drought-stricken South Africa over the past month appear to have brought unexpected joy to man and beast.

Christo van der Linde, Kruger National Park public relations officer, said the rains had transformed the game reserve. "The hippos are very happy because they are able to wallow freely again," he said. "While the weather was dry and hot, the hippos got very grumpy, but that has all changed. In fact, everyone is smiling."

The rutting season had started several weeks early, and he attributed this to the change in the weather. "There are so many baby warthogs running around, the hyenas are going to have a great Christmas feast."

In Bushpark Ridge, 60 miles north of Kruger Park in the farthest reaches of the Northern Transvaal, Lungu Masuku, editor of *Bush Telegraph* News, said traditional tribal celebrations had already begun, after the first rains for three years triggered an outpouring of joy.

In the next few days tribal chiefs from the region will gather for a huge feast where several oversized beasts will be slaughtered and traditional dances performed to honour ancestors. "It will be a rowdy occasion with a lot of drinking and fighting," Mr Masuku said. "It is considered a good thing to fight when you are drunk and happy."

Leading article, page 17

£160m home loans rip-off is revealed

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*Applies based on Standard Variable Rate Repayment Mortgage, correct at 13 December 1995. NB: All rates quoted are for standard variable rate mortgages. The standard variable rate will be reduced to the borrower once the mortgage is set up (for the example quoted the rate would be 6.125%). Direct Line will pay the legal fees only where the mortgage on the borrower's existing home is transferred using Direct Line's special arrangements for legal fees. Written quotations are available on request. Some mortgages may require payment of a fee to the existing lender when being transferred. The guaranteed interest rate only applies if your current mortgage is repaid by your lender and is subject to our normal underwriting criteria and corresponding levels of cover.

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Militia bombardment rains destruction on Kabul

HOSPITALS, schools and mosques are being targeted in a shelling campaign against the residential areas of Kabul by a radical Islamic movement seeking to overthrow President Rabbani.

Thousands of civilians are being killed and mutilated by the Taliban militia, a fundamentalist student movement led by Mullah Omar, which is besieging Kabul's estimated one million population from the west, south and east. Rockets, mortars, and 500lb parachute bombs which explode above the ground, showering shrapnel over a wide area, have been raining down on the city since the renewal of fighting two months ago.

The current bombardment is the latest agony suffered by the Afghan people during 16 years of civil war and anarchy, which has led to the disintegration of the country and the destruction of Kabul. After ten years of Soviet occupation, and six years of civil war, more than 85 per cent of the city has been reduced to rubble. Vast areas of the city are a reminder of the 1945 bombing of Dresden.

The streets are littered with burnt-out tanks, armoured personnel carriers and other military hardware. During the Cold War, America and the former Soviet Union poured billions of dollars worth of weapons into Afghanistan, giving the primitive armies some of the world's most sophisticated arms.

More than one million people have died in the fighting since the start of the Soviet occupation in 1979. This includes the estimated 100,000 deaths in Kabul during fighting between mujahidin factions after the fall of the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah in 1992.

The fighting has created more than five million refugees, one million widows and half a million orphans out of Afghanistan's 17 million population, and has destroyed the



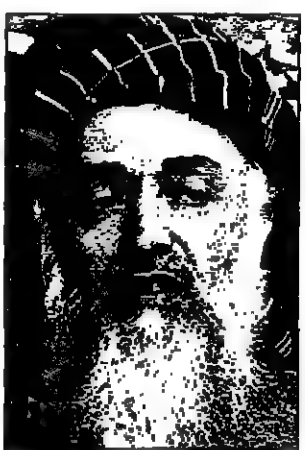
The campaign of shelling by the Taliban is the latest agony to be suffered by Afghans, Michael Dynes reports

fragile economy. There is no electricity in the capital, and 90 per cent of buildings are without heat. People have been burning the country's famous carpets in order to keep warm.

Kabul is now the most heavily mined city in history. An estimated six to seven million mines have been laid by successive governments and Mujahidin factions, and minefields are being created faster than the old ones are being cleared.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which runs two hospitals in Kabul and supplies four others, calculates that some 50,000 people have lost limbs after stepping on landmines. Many are young children, rummaging for wood.

Most Afghans hoped that the fighting would stop after the fall of Mr Najibullah, but Kabul and other cities, which had remained largely unaffected by the previous fighting, rapidly became battlegrounds



Rabbani: presides over city of mines and ruins

for mujahidin factions. By the autumn of 1994, the Taliban suddenly emerged from the chaos, and rapidly swept through the south of the country. Declaring themselves a "neutral security force", they set about disarming local commanders and imposing sharia law.

The Taliban, thought to number some 40,000 fighters, took the southern city of Kandahar in November last year. They have used it as a base from which to launch assaults on other parts of the country, almost half of which is now under their control.

By February, the Taliban entered western Kabul. Their advance was stopped only after two weeks of ferocious street fighting, which left thousands of fighters on both sides dead and reduced vast areas of the city to ruins.

Although Mr Rabbani's forces pushed the Taliban 20 miles beyond the city limits, they have failed to repel them beyond rocketing range, despite nightly bombardments by government jets. All attempts at international mediation have failed. The Government and the Taliban now face each other in an uneasy stand-off, which is claiming the lives of countless civilians, in a conflict all but ignored by the rest of the world.

The British Red Cross today launches an emergency appeal for the situation in Afghanistan. Address: British Red Cross Afghanistan Appeal, Freepost, London SW1X 7BR. Credit card donations: 0171 201 5010.

Leading article, page 17



Jade Maiwand, one of the main streets in Kabul's old city centre, has been destroyed in ferocious street fighting between government forces and the Taliban militia. Known to Western tourists as the street of a thousand carpet shops, it was turned to rubble in March

No hiding place in shattered capital

BY MICHAEL DYNES

WE HEARD the first shell land in the distance during a visit to some bombed-out Kabul apartment blocks inhabited by refugees, and thought nothing of it. But as we made our way back to the Red Cross headquarters, Christopher Squires, the ITN cameraman, spotted bodies lying in the road. As we approached the crowd we saw two bodies, one of which had been vaporised from the waist down. A large pool of blood lay congealing on the road, and body parts were scat-

tered everywhere. While the ITN cameraman spoke to a group of on-lookers, we heard the tell-tale whoosh of another rocket as it landed 20 yards away. The explosion shook our vehicle and a flash of panic shot across the face of our Afghan interpreter. Everyone raced for cover: we had found ourselves in the middle of a salvo of Taliban shells. Had the second one not fallen on soft ground, the toll would have been much higher. The ITN cameraman, showered in

mud, checked himself to make sure he had not been hit. We all dashed to the vehicle to get out of the area, knowing more shells were on the way. We made our way to the Wazir Akbar Khan hospital where the injured had been taken. In the waiting room we saw Abdul Aziz, 24, writhing in agony. Pieces of shrapnel had hit him in his upper and lower right leg, his abdomen was bleeding profusely, and his right shoulder had been blown off.

The doctors said they could not give him any painkillers because they did not want his bodily systems to slow down. As he lay there, screaming for his son, his tearful wife waited in the adjacent corridor. Some days later, we discovered that he had survived but would lose the whole arm. Five shells fell that day, killing four people and injuring six. In adjoining streets, life went on as normal. It was just another day in Kabul.

Ministers to devise Nigeria strategy

BY MICHAEL DYNES
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, will join seven fellow Commonwealth Foreign Ministers in talks in London today aimed at finding ways to put pressure on Nigeria and other Commonwealth countries violating political and human rights.

The first meeting of the Commonwealth action group, set up at the organisation's summit in Auckland, New Zealand, last month, will be at the Commonwealth secretariat. The eight members are the Foreign Ministers of Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe. They will plot a strategy for enforcing on all 52 members the Harare declarations, which bind them to a code of democratic and civil rights.

Nigeria, suspended from membership after the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other activists accused of responsibility for the murder of Ogoni leaders, will be the main topic. The ministers will consider freezing the overseas assets of the military leaders, tightening visa restrictions and perhaps imposing an oil embargo.

□ Lagos: Nigerian police yesterday fired teargas to disperse hundreds of opposition demonstrators gathered here to demand an immediate return to democracy, witnesses said. One said police fired teargas after someone distributed leaflets which read "We demand democracy now" at Yaba bus station in Lagos. No casualties or arrests were reported. (Reuters)

Communists build on lead in Russian polls

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S victorious Communist Party yesterday strengthened its dominant lead in Sunday's parliamentary elections, as results suggested that the hard Left could secure a third of the seats in the new assembly.

With two-thirds of the votes counted by yesterday evening, the Communist lead continued to grow as the party's percentage of the nationwide ballot remained stable and it surged ahead in the single-mandate constituencies.

Under Russia's complicated electoral system, half the members of the 450-seat Duma, the Lower House of parliament, are elected on party lists and the other half are selected from local constituencies. Parties need at least 5 per cent of the popular vote to be admitted to the Duma.

Final results are not expected until today, but by last night the Communists had secured 21.5 per cent of the vote in the party race and 49 seats at constituency level. Their share of the vote is likely to rise again when the ballots

are counted from outlying rural areas, traditionally Communist strongholds.

In a further boost to their prospects, several smaller left-wing parties secured mandates from local constituency races, which was likely to give the hardliners scores of extra Duma seats.

"In all probability we will have 30 per cent of the votes in the federal [party] list, and a little bit more than that in single-seat constituencies," Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader, said.

Pravda, the once mighty daily newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party which has recently fallen on hard times, could not conceal its delight and compared the spread of Western democratic values in Russia to the AIDS virus. "The nation has demonstrated strong immunity against the virus of anti-communism," it said.

The ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy maintained second place with 10.8 per cent of the vote. While it only

picked up one extra seat from the single constituency ballots, other nationalists fared better: Aleksandr Lebed's Congress of Russian Communities managed to secure five seats.

Although the anti-reformist block of left-wing and nationalist parties is expected to dominate parliament they will be short of the two-thirds majority needed to challenge seriously the authority of the Kremlin.

In spite of the size of the Communist victory and calls for his resignation, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, vowed that no major changes would be made to his Government or his policy of economic reform and stabilisation.

"Changes, shifts, sackings — nothing of the sort will happen," said Mr Chernomyrdin, whose Our Home is Russia party had secured 9.6 per cent of the vote by last night. "Personnel changes have routinely taken place and will take place in future but they have nothing to do with this [election]."

Arctic victory leaves Kozyrev out in the cold at ministry

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL IN MOSCOW

ANDREI KOZYREV, the Russian Foreign Minister, was on the verge of resignation last night after he confirmed his victory in a local election constituency in the Arctic city of Murmansk.

Mr Kozyrev, the longest serving minister in the Yeltsin Government, said he planned to meet the President in the next few days to discuss his future. Under new rules, parliamentary deputies are no longer allowed to be government ministers. Taking his seat and resigning as minister

would be an honourable way for Mr Kozyrev to leave the administration.

"I have my own thoughts but I feel it is inappropriate to announce this decision," Mr Kozyrev said yesterday after meeting Sir Andrew Wood, the British Ambassador.

Mr Kozyrev said that his personal victory in Murmansk, where he defeated Lyubov Zhirinovskaya, the sister of the extreme nationalist leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, was a sign that reformers could win the argu-

ment over the opposition. But he said the heavy vote for the Communists was an alarm bell. Russians had voted more "against" than "for", he said, and the administration should "analyse honestly" what they had voted against.

A shift in foreign policy will most likely mean a more aggressive stand against the expansion of Nato into Eastern Europe. Gennadi Zyuganov, the leader of the Communist Party, has made that one of his main themes in the past two days.



Westendorp: not likely to commit any gaffes

New voice of Spain takes over

FROM EDWARD OWEN
IN MADRID

CARLOS WESTENDORP was sworn in yesterday by King Juan Carlos as the new Spanish Foreign Minister, replacing Javier Solana, who was in Brussels to take up his post as Secretary-General of Nato. Señor Westendorp, 58, a career diplomat, was formerly Madrid's Secretary of State for European Union Affairs.

His appointment was welcomed by foreign diplomats and by staff at the Foreign Ministry. There had been fears that Felipe González, the Prime Minister, would choose a Socialist Party hardliner in the run-up to the general election in March.

But a government source said yesterday that Señor González had chosen Señor Westendorp because of his detailed grasp of the immediate foreign policy issues. Three months would have been needed for an outsider to take the reins, and Señor Westendorp is unlikely to commit any gaffes in the pre-poll period.

"I will continue the work of the Government," he declared, indicating that there would be no changes in Spain's policy, including its claim to Gibraltar.

Belgian transport strikes cause havoc

BY CHARLES BRENNER

TRANSPORT services in Belgium were crippled yesterday when railway workers and staff at Sabena, the state airline, staged strikes against cutbacks imposed in a government drive to curb the country's sprawling national debt.

In the latest of a series of strikes by a disgruntled state sector that echo the recent unrest in France, workers at Sabena halted most of the airline's 300 daily flights, causing chaos at Brussels airport. Rail services were severely disrupted by an unannounced stoppage, mainly by workers in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern region, against a planned ten-year overhaul of the loss-making company. Passengers on the Eurostar service to London were driven by bus across the border to catch the train at Lille, where rail services are again running after the three-week French strike.

The airline and railway staff are angry that their employers have announced austerity plans without the consultation which is traditional in the consensual Belgian system of

labour relations. Last week about 50,000 civil servants and other public-sector workers marched through central Brussels in protest against a pay freeze planned by the Government of Jean-Luc Dehaene to staunch the losses in the state sector.

The unrest over the austerity package, due to be announced next month, is generating new tension between the country's two linguistic communities. In the latest flare-up, Johan van Hecke, the chairman of the Flemish Christian Democrat party, one of the members of the government coalition, accused Wallonia of living off the labour of the Flemings.

Mr van Hecke said his party would "not allow Belgium to be fed by Flanders and milked by Wallonia". Flemish resentment of the higher welfare spending on Wallonia has intensified over the past year as the Dehaene Government has begun adding new taxes to bring down the national debt so that Belgium can qualify for European monetary union in 1998.

France 'to keep checks at borders'

Brussels: According to a Belgian official, France is preparing unilaterally to retain border checks with its six European partners in the Schengen zone at a meeting here today. Paris is expected to say that it is doing so because the bloc has failed to keep drugs, illegal immigration and terrorism under control.

France delayed the planned end to border controls last July 1, using an Article of the Schengen Convention which allows members unilaterally to keep checks for six months. In Paris the French Foreign Ministry declined to say what France's position would be at today's meeting. (Reuters)

Abduction hunt

Lugano: Swiss police began a massive search for the kidnappers of Geo Mantegazza, a billionaire property and travel tycoon seized from his office in southern Switzerland on Monday. (AP)

Angola crash

Kinshasa: A Zairean passenger aircraft with 136 people on board, most of them Angolans, crashed in northern Angola and all but five were feared dead. Transport Ministry officials said. (Reuters)

Somali kidnap

Mogadishu: Gunmen working for General Muhammad Farrah Aidid, the Somali warlord, kidnapped Marco Lorenzetti, 35, in a pay dispute with an Italian-based agricultural training organisation.

Christmas bash

Sydney: Santa Claus, handing out sweets in Bourke, 370 miles northwest of Sydney, was forced to flee in a van when about 30 children, aged eight to 13, kicked, punched and pinched him. (AP)

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هكذا من الاصل

First Lady under fire on Whitewater 'contradictions'

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

SENATE Whitewater investigators are homing in on Hillary Clinton after publishing subpoenaed documents on Monday that appeared to contradict her sworn evidence given to federal regulators.

The documents were notes made by Susan Thomases, a New York lawyer and one of the First Lady's closest friends, showing that Mrs Clinton did far more legal work for the Arkansas bank at the heart of the Whitewater affair than she has admitted. Moreover, records of Mrs Clinton's bills to the bank, Madison Guaranty, have vanished from her old law firm in Little Rock.

Madison employed Mrs Clinton in the mid-1980s when it was seeking help from officials appointed by her husband, the state Governor, to save off bankruptcy. Its owner, Jim McDougal, was also improperly diverting its funds into the Whitewater development corporation he jointly owned with the Clintons.

Madison collapsed in 1989 at a cost to the taxpayer of \$60 million (\$39 million), and Republicans on the Senate Whitewater committee believe Mrs Clinton must have known what was going on. They also strongly suspect

that the First Lady orchestrated a cover-up in the wake of Vincent Foster's apparent suicide in July 1993.

The committee has obtained records showing a flurry of phone calls between Mrs Clinton in Little Rock and Ms Thomases in New York immediately after the discovery of the deputy White House counsel's body, and from Mrs Thomases to White House officials. Mr Foster had been handling Whitewater issues.

Within hours Bernard Nussbaum, the White House counsel, Maggie Williams, Mrs Clinton's Chief of Staff, and Patsy Thomason, an aide, had searched his office. A secret service agent has said that he saw Ms Williams remove files, which she denies. Mr Nussbaum subsequently stopped police and Justice Department officials from searching the office.

The committee has ordered Mr Williams and Ms Thomases three times each to give evidence. Both have repeatedly claimed that they could not recall key conversations. After Ms Thomases's third appearance on Monday, Alfonso D'Amato, the Republican chairman, asked the committee's lawyers to determine

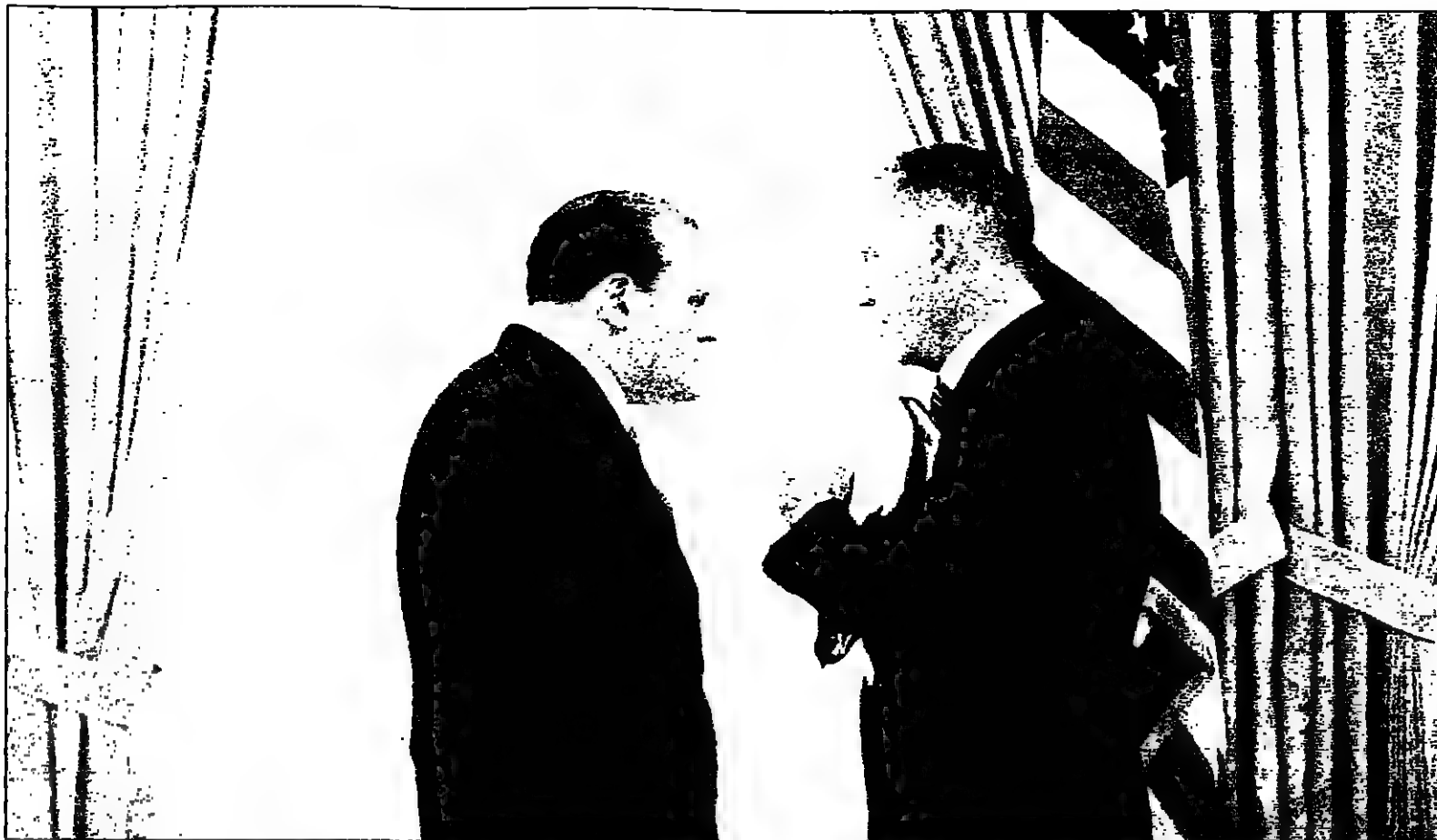
whether "the level of failure of recollection ... reaches the threshold of deliberate lying", and some Republicans are demanding that Mrs Clinton be summoned.

The Senate is expected to vote today to take the White House to court to obtain subpoenaed records of a 1993 meeting between President Clinton's lawyers and advisers. Republicans believe the participants plotted to foil two Whitewater-related federal investigations using improperly acquired inside information, an accusation the White House vigorously denies.

Mrs Clinton insisted during the 1992 presidential campaign, and in a sworn affidavit to federal regulators in 1994, that her work for Madison was minimal, and the bulk was done by Richard Massey, a Rose law firm colleague. That is contradicted by notes Ms Thomases made when helping the Clintons handle press inquiries about Whitewater during the 1992 campaign.

They say Mrs Clinton had "numerous conferences" with Madison officials about a deal the bank was proposing to state regulators to keep itself in business. They show she spoke to the State Securities Commissioner who was appointed by her husband and whose approval was required. That approval was given in 1985, enabling Madison to continue accruing debts.

Mrs Clinton has also claimed that Mr Massey persuaded Madison to employ the Rose law firm. Ms Thomases's notes state Mr Massey "will say he had a lot to do with getting client in". Mr Massey has since denied doing so, and Mr McDougal has claimed he began paying Mrs Clinton a \$200,000-a-month fee after Mr Clinton had complained to him of financial difficulties. The Clintons have denied that account.



Sir Anthony Hopkins, left, as Nixon in a scene from Oliver Stone's latest movie, which is condemned as "degrading" by the family

Stone raises storm with film on Nixon

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

MEMBERS of the late Richard Nixon's family have attacked the new Hollywood "biopic" of the former US President. The film, which depicts Mr Nixon as a hard-drinking, foul-mouthed conspirator, was a "character assassination" and was "repulsive", they said.

Nixon stars Sir Anthony Hopkins as a hunchbacked President troubled by dark spells, a man of rapacious ego, though ultimately a tragic figure. The film opens in America today.

In a statement, Mr Nixon's daughters Tricia and Julie and their husbands said that the film's creators "concocted imaginary scenes of the Nixon's private life. Richard Nixon's family life as a boy and a young man and his public life that are calculated solely and maliciously to defame and degrade President and Mrs Nixon's memories in the mind of the American public".

Oliver Stone had waited to make his picture until both Richard and Pat Nixon were dead, "expressly to prevent their asserting their rights under

the law". In the movie the Nixons have a strained relationship.

The family took issue particularly with suggestions that Mr Nixon supervised an American unit which planned to kill Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, and that Mr Nixon believed the unit was later turned against President Kennedy. Linking him thus with the Kennedy assassination was so "repulsive" that it should render wholly illegitimate any

text or narrative in which it is contained".

Mr Stone, whose previous work includes *JFK* and *Platoon*, responded to the Nixon family's complaints with a statement of his own. "While I understand the distress that any effort to examine the life of Richard Nixon might create for the family, our purpose in making the film was neither malicious nor defamatory," he said. He had intended merely "to

attempt a fuller understanding of the life and career of Richard Nixon — the good and the bad, the triumphs and the tragedies and the legacy he left his nation and the world".

The Stone movie comes at a time of renewed media interest in the Nixon presidency. Earlier this month a television film, *Nixon and Kissinger*, cast the President as an anti-Semite and Dr Henry Kissinger as an agent of sleaze. A furious Dr Kissinger said that the film was a fantasy infused with "malicious innuendo — a skilful blend of innuendo, distortion and misrepresentation". Ironically, that film was written by Lionel Chetwynd, one of the few right-wing people in Hollywood.

In the Stone film, the former US Secretary of State comes across no more flatteringly — as a yes-man. The late J. Edgar Hoover is presented as a megalomaniacal homosexual, Bob Haldeman is shown as a bigoted loyalist, and General Alexander Haig emerges as a realist who would not snap to the breeze.

New release of secrets

Washington: The latest batch of documents relating to the Nixon presidency was released yesterday (Tom Rhodes writes).

Among those poring over the 50,000 pages of information at the National Archives were two, probably Republican, consultants for next year's presidential campaign, checking cross-references to Republican nomination candidates. Robert Dole, the front-

runner, chaired the Republican National Committee during part of the Nixon tenure. Lamar Alexander, a former Tennessee Governor, and Pat Buchanan, the commentator, were also involved in his Administration.

Information on Ross Perot, the Texas billionaire, and General Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who have come close to running for the presidency, was also included.



Vincent Foster, whose office in the White House was searched by aides of Hillary Clinton after his death

Red faces over black Barbies

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

AMERICANS facing a Christmas shortage of Caucasian Barbie Dolls have a high-tech solution: buy one on the Internet for six times the retail price.

While black versions of the best-selling Barbie languish on toyshop shelves, parents of every ethnic hue have been posting offers of up to \$200 (£130) on electronic bulletin boards for sought-after white ones.

Mattel Inc, the manufacturer, says last year ten per cent of "Happy Holidays" Barbie Dolls were black — reflecting America's ethnic make-up — and they sold out before Christmas. This year the company raised the proportion to 40 per cent, but overcompensated.

Child psychologists say American girls associate white dolls with beauty, purity and goodness. White "Happy Holidays" Barbies, which cost about \$35, are almost as popular with black girls as white ones.

Inflated Internet prices show timing is everything. Mattel has offered coupons for white Barbies at their recommended retail price — redeemable in April.

US business urges budget deal

BY MARTIN FLETCHER

PRESIDENT CLINTON was holding an emergency White House meeting with Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, and Robert Dole, the Senate majority leader, last night as pressure grew on them to resolve their protracted dispute on the US budget.

Ninety of America's corporate leaders took out two-page newspaper advertisements to demand an end to the "political gridlock" and agree a credible plan to balance the budget in seven years.

More than 250,000 federal workers were forced to stay away from work as the Government remained partially shut for lack of funds for a fourth consecutive day. Beneficiary payments to nearly 17 million welfare recipients and military veterans will be delayed unless it reopens before Christmas. Wall Street sent

Washington a powerful vote of no-confidence on Monday as the stock market suffered its biggest one-day drop in four years, and yesterday produced a crop of scathing newspaper editorials.

The *Los Angeles Times* called the Washington budget game "loathsome" and demanded that Congress and the President forfeit their pay until they deliver a budget.

The tourist industry is being hammered by the shutdown which has closed the capital's national monuments and museums. It lost an estimated \$12 million (£7.8 million) during last month's six-day closure and fears this repeat performance will deter potential visitors for months to come.

The budget should have been agreed at the start of the fiscal year on October 1. Eleven weeks and two govern-

ment stoppages later, Mr Clinton has agreed in principle to the Republican goal of a balanced budget by 2002, but the two sides cannot agree on how. The Republicans are insisting on far larger cuts in taxes and popular social programmes than the President will accept, and on the use of less risky economic forecasts.

On Monday night Mr Clinton offered the Republican leaders two options. He would personally join the negotiations provided they abandoned all preconditions, or he would accept their tough economic assumptions if they agreed to his shallower cuts in health insurance programmes for the poor and elderly.

Mr Gingrich and Mr Dole consented to a meeting without conditions, but neither side was hopeful it would produce a breakthrough.

Richard Armitage, the House leader, predicted "a very difficult discussion as long as the President remains so inflexible and rigid and so unwilling to get down to the hard work that's required".

Mr Clinton had until now left direct negotiations with the Republicans to Leon Panetta, the White House Chief of Staff, but Mike McCurry, his spokesman, said the President "wants to get the Government open and he wants to balance the budget, and there does not appear to be any way toward those goals without a face-to-face discussion".

Mr McCurry said the Administration would also cease using the term "non-essential" to describe those federal workers who have been laid off. In deference to their sensibilities, it would describe them as "non-emergency".

Republican values slide in 'Fornigate'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

A YEAR after they took Capitol Hill by storm on a spate of broken marriages and tales of repeated infidelity among young Republicans is threatening to undermine the ideals of their revolution and provide easy ammunition for their Democratic opponents in Congress.

After arriving in Washington in November 1994, the celebrated Republican

freshmen class of '95, comprising 73 of Newt Gingrich's most ardent supporters, signed up for weekly bible classes and formed a caucus to fight welfare support for unmarried mothers. Mr Gingrich, the Speaker, vowed that the new class would "turn values into policy and not just leave them as empty rhetoric".

Twelve months later, four marriages have collapsed, two are on the rocks and reports of serial infidelity from the cloakroom at the House of Representatives are increasing by the day. It has

become so bad that the bible group has started praying for "protection against rumours" and "support" for those whose reputations have been sullied.

Democrats have seized on a growing embarrassment among Republican ranks. "We've all been tittering about it," said Pat Schroeder, the Colorado Democrat. "There are even people calling it 'Fornigate'. But to see this group that is so strong on preaching fall apart on practising is nothing to titter about. It's really sad."



Brinkley: dropped claim for cash and property

Model agrees \$2m divorce settlement

New York: Christie Brinkley, the former supermodel and one-time "Uptown Girl", has given her husband a divorce settlement reportedly worth \$2 million (£1.3 million). Miss Brinkley, 42, who married Rick Taubman a year ago this week, dropped demands for cash and property. He is left with the couple's house in Colorado (Quentin Letts writes).

Their wedding was held on a ski slope, with the bride in wedding dress and ski boots. They had a son, Jack, born in the summer. Miss Brinkley, who still works as a model, is a former wife of Billy Joel, the singer, who described her in one song as the "Uptown Girl".

CIA boss predicts huge surge in world terrorism

FROM REUTER IN WASHINGTON

JOHN DEUTCH, the head of the CIA, yesterday predicted a worldwide surge in terrorism in the next decade and said that he was shifting American intelligence resources to help to meet the threat.

"I regret that I have come to the conclusion there is going to be tremendous growth in terrorism over the next decade or so, not only directed towards Americans but throughout the world," he told the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee.

Mr Deutch said that the forecast rise in terrorism would have "immense impact on how we conduct our foreign policy, immense impact on how American businesses operate abroad".

Replying to a question about the threat, Mr Deutch did not discuss why he expected a surge nor pinpoint the possible perpetrators. But in his opening statement he said: "It is my judgment that ideologies and regimes inimical to democracy will continue to exist. Examples today are Iran, Iraq and North Korea." He also cited unspecified transnational groups involved in drug running, organised crime and terrorism.

Mr Deutch said the CIA and its sister US intelligence agen-

cies were "shifting resources" to cope with the threat. He called for a halt in criticism of the CIA's covert operations arm, decided in recent years for bungled operations ranging from the discovery of a Moscow mole in its midst to bribing bureaucrats for trade secrets in Paris.

Los Angeles: Dozens of assault rifles and four inflatable rubber rafts were among a stockpile of military hardware seized by the FBI after a dawn raid that foiled an amateur scheme to invade Cuba (Giles Whittell writes).

Three Cuban immigrants were arrested in the raid on a warehouse in east Los Angeles, where detailed plans for the invasion attempt were also found. Rene Cruz Jr, 47, and Rafael Garcia, 45, were arrested on Saturday and charged with conspiracy and expedition against a friendly nation — a term applying to all countries with which America is not at war — at a preliminary hearing.

The documents found in the raid included papers showing the trio had bought a 50ft shrimp fishing boat that could carry 30 people. Also seized were grenades, bayonets, handcuffs and flare guns.

"What can I get for Richard?"



Madonna "Something To Remember"

A collection of Madonna's best love songs, including classics like "Oh Father", "Rain", "Take A Bow", "This Used To Be My Playground" and "I'll Remember", together with new tracks including her recent hit "You'll See" and "I Want You" (with Massive Attack).



Enya "The Memory Of Trees"

Enya's brand new album has been four years in the making and the consensus is that it is her best yet. "Haunting, enchanting... extraordinary" (Daily Express). "Like nothing else on Earth" (NME). Includes the hit single "Anywhere But In".



Alanis Morissette "Jagged Little Pill"

Not only has Alanis lived through some troubled times but she fights back with words that will have you nodding in agreement and smiling at the wit with which she deals the killer blow. Undoubtedly the hottest new star of 1995, her album contains the hits "You Oughta Know" and "Hand In My Pocket".



Seal "SEAL"

Seal's second album is a worthy follow up to his classic debut album. Contains the hits "Prayer For The Dying", "Kiss From A Rose" (which was featured in *Batman Forever* and went to Number One in the USA), "Newborn Friend", "I'm Alive" and "Don't Cry". An album for lovers everywhere.



Cher "It's A Man's World"

One of the most illustrious albums of Cher's lengthy recording career, it includes "Walking In Memphis", "One By One" and classics such as "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" and "It's A Man's World". With her unique voice sounding as rich and powerful as ever this new album is a must for Cher fans new and old.

The secrets of see-through fashion

Sheer delight in the bare necessities



When fashion designers dress models in glamorous gowns of sheer chiffon or spidery lace, women everywhere can be heard muttering, "How am I supposed to wear that?" Yet there are few seasons when see-through does not feature as an alluring after-dark alternative.

There are endless variations — from the exotic and explicit to the discreet and charming. There may be few women (with the exception of Liz Hurley and Madonna) who can wear the full-length black chiffon evening dress by Dolce & Gabbana — which does little to cover a woman's modesty — yet this show-stopping outfit presents peek-a-boo chic at its most overt. However, not every designer wants their customer to dress like Demi Moore in *Striptease*, the film which is presently wowing the fashion pack in New York.

Discovering how designers interpret a trend is both exciting and telling. While Dolce & Gabbana might go overboard with see-through daytime suits trimmed around the collar and cuffs with black fake fur, the more conservative New Yorker Oscar de la Renta keeps his cool with a heavily embroidered lace evening dress with the barest minimum of semi-exposed flesh — a shadow of fine silk tulle stretched across the shoulders and arms.

John Galiano, British Designer of the Year, inserts a trail of black chiffon flowers into a white bias-cut slithery gown; Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel offers black lace skirts worn with matching plain knit sweaters; Betty Jackson puts a see-through top with a ballerina-length ballgown skirt, while Sportmax slips a beaded transparent top over a strapless dress.

There is no right or wrong

way to join the see-through set. If you are feeling bold, Jenny Packham's mesh body with ribbon lace and beaded embroidery will definitely cause heads to turn. For the less exhibitionist, there are several ways to allude to see-through without baring all.

Organza fits fashion's brief. The fabric looks best cut into a boxy 1950s-style fly-front shirt. Wear this over a shoe-string strap or strapless dress. Lace makes a less obvious alternative. Its romantic image softens the mood. Romeo Gigli is famous for his mysterious vision — when the fashion world was obsessed with power dressing. Gigli served up fragile fairy-tale princesses cooed in coats of pleated organza and wrapped in wisps of chiffon. His latest designs are just as special: his black stitched chiffon dress worn over a shoe-string strap slip is covered with subtle beadwork.

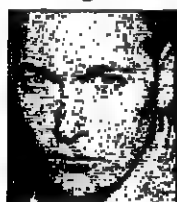
If a strappy dress leaves shoulders and arms bare, then drape yourself with a diaphanous devoré velvet wrap which continues the theme while giving just enough coverage.

A see-through stretch body is another option. Worn over a strapless brassiere, longer line bustier or even a skinny vest top, it provides the effect without cause for concern. Some mesh bodies come complete with faux bustiers in stretch satin or velvet.

This trend can be assimilated into the wardrobe in the most understated way — it could be just a shoe with see-through panels, or the merest glimpse of legs clad in sheer black tights showing through the side split of a modest black dress.

Fashion doesn't have to alienate. With a few minor adjustments it can reveal countless opportunities for everyone to join in the fun.

Fashion journalist of the year



IAIN R. WEBB



LEFT ABOVE: Grey satin jacket, £145, long black wrap skirt £59, Jigsaw, branches nationwide (0181-878 8443). Sheer body, £55, Wolford, major department stores nationwide. Lace strapless bra, £17.99, Gossard, House of Fraser stores nationwide (0171-331 4519). RIGHT ABOVE: Stretch black beaded body, £182, long black split skirt with sash, £215, Jenny Packham, Harrods, SW1; Selfridges, Oxford Street, W1; Fenwicks, Bond Street, W1; Jenners, 48 Princes Street, Edinburgh. Ultra Five Tights, £3 49, Aristoc, major stores.

Photographs by IAIN R. WEBB. Make-up by Jo Karsberg. Hair by James Dodds.

ABOVE: Black organza shirt, £79, Liberty, Regent Street, W1. Black satin fine strap dress, £49.99. Warehouse branches nationwide (0181-910 1400). Long lace gloves, £9.99, Dents branches nationwide. Diamante cross, £18.50, Butler & Wilson, 20 South Molton St, W1. ABOVE LEFT: Silk dress with lace overdress, £770, Romeo Gigli, 82 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-495 6730). Devoré wrap, £195, Liberty, as above. Cross as above.

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Girls just want to have fun

Christmas parties are a minefield of temptation — but it isn't only men who are indiscreet. **Jason Cowley on women behaving badly**

THE LIMELIGHT Club in Piccadilly is packed tonight. The music is loud, the air is thick with cigarette smoke and other exotic scents, and everywhere you look there are young women behaving badly.

But this is no ordinary club night in raveland — this is the annual office party of a leading publishing house, and these liberated, daring women are behaving no differently from thousands of others across the country who have spent the Christmas party season having fun and seeking pleasure.

A survey published last week claimed that almost half of all office romances began at Christmas parties.

Julia Cole of the relationship counselling agency Relate confirms that the Christmas party season is a minefield of temptation and indiscretion.

"Most people spend more time at work than they do at home. So naturally they are going to develop feelings for their colleagues and Christmas parties, with their alcohol and mistletoe, encourage intimacy and the indulgence of long suppressed desires. Relationships are under tremendous strain at this time of year."

So, as the recipient of as many as four invitations to a night to publishing parties, I thought I'd test the veracity of these claims by spending the run-up to Christmas doing nothing but going to parties. That publishing is notoriously overpopulated with young women may also have influenced my thinking.

Yet my week begins slowly at the *Times Literary Supplement* bash. The occasion is earnestly hushed, there is very little sign of any indiscretion, but the malt whisky is good and I do see a tall, striking redhead in a Katharine Hamnett dress locked in an embrace with an aged don, his nose bulbously inflated.

The next night, however, I find what I am looking for. The Publishers Publicity Circle's Christmas party is usually one of the highlights of the season. This is the event at which even the waiters carrying trays of canapés are not safe from groping girls; at which one publicist famously offered the literary editor of a respectable broadsheet regular sex if he would publish a review of one of the books she was promoting. And that is one of the cleaner stories I can relate.

The world of publishing publicity is the preserve of the south London Sloane set, and as I arrive at the Groucho Club in Soho I hear the sound of the daughters of the English county families braying for broken glass. The party is held in a dark, intimate upstairs room. Women outnumber men by almost ten to one. The room vibrates with the throb of expectation. Whistles and shrieks pierce the air. I grab a glass of wine and watch as the man from the BBC emerges gingerly from a thicket of Camillas and Francescas, only to be dragged back into the fray by a voluptuous blonde from whose tanned wrist hangs sparkling jewels.

You move through the closed, airless world of this party with blanching fascination. There is so much wine that every woman seems to be holding a glass of red in one hand and a glass of white in the other. Everyone seems to be smoking. Many of the dresses and skirts, most of which are black, are cut thrillingly short. For such a



Anita Ekberg lets down her hair in *La Dolce Vita*. This week thousands of women across the country are doing the same on the frenzied Christmas party circuit

cold night, there is so much exposed flesh on display. These women really do just want to have fun.

The first person I meet is the inveterate partygoer Minna Fry, who is still celebrating her inclusion in *Tailor's "Black Book"* of the hottest dates in town. Although her glass of wine is half full, she immediately asks if I can get her another one.

"The great thing about Christmas parties is that you can get away with anything," she says through a haze of cigarette smoke. "You can always have a quick snog or a grope with someone you've fancied for ages because the next day you can blame the wine."

As I move towards the bar, avoiding the sea of outstretched hands, I am stopped by Kay Scott

from Bloomsbury Publishers. She is 22 and has a feline seductiveness. "Have you read any good sex scenes lately?" she asks by way of introduction. Before I can think of an appropriate riposte, she turns away, her Ghost mini-dress and knee-length suede boots disappearing in a swirl of moving bodies.

Later, I see Kay again, arm wrapped nonchalantly around a rather startled-looking chap. He is a doctor, and he confesses to being at the wrong party. But he doesn't seem to care much, since his shirt is open, and Kay's friend is running her fingers through his damp chest hair.

"I wandered into this party by mistake," the doctor says. "But I was having such a good time I decided to stay. I've never met girls like these before."

One of the few women in the room who is waiting for men to approach her is Eliza Sportborg of Midas PR. Huskily voiced and languidly guarded, her eyes spark mischievously as we swap stories

about other people's bad behaviour. But has she herself ever done anything she regretted at an office party?

"No," she says a little too defensively. "But a couple of years ago I worked on a newspaper, and at our Christmas party one of the secretaries had you-know-what in a back room with two different columnists — and in less than half an hour." I am encouraged by her story, but when I spy the shining band of gold on the third finger of her left hand, I understand why she is happy to be one of the pursued, not a pursuer.

My next stop is the Penguin

authors' party in Kensington, where last year I saw the definitive Sixties wild child, Marianne Faithfull, elegant in black and gold, share a drink with the writer Mick Brown, while sidling up to

Jeremy Paxman. The guest list looks just as good this year, but first you have to get there.

It is a cold, clear, windswept winter's night, but the streets are bustling with energy. As I flag down a cab, a couple burst out of the shadows behind me and get into it.

The girl is wearing very little and she huddles against the man in the back seat. He looks out of the window as the cab pulls away, and for some reason he reminds me of the doctor who was talking to me at the party. Then I remember that glass of wine I promised Minna Fry, and hurry back inside.

The lost art of the formal introduction

Rachel Kelly on why hostesses no longer do the proper thing at parties

IT HAS happened to all of us. You arrive at the festive doorway. You are shown to a room full of strangers. And left. When were you last introduced to someone who had two names? More often than not, if we are introduced at all, we get only a first name. Lost are the opportunities for shared gossip if only we'd realised we were talking to that Johnnie. And gained are the chances of being rude if, for example, you were chatting to Carol and insulted Lady T. before you realised you were talking to her daughter.

The social field has become even more heavily mined since professional couples no longer share the same surname. Beware of insulting someone who could just turn out to be your companion's spouse.

Lady Elizabeth Anson, cousin of the Queen, is the power behind Party Planners and an accomplished hostess. She bemoans the lost art of the introduction. "The typical thing about the British is that they don't speak to someone unless someone else introduces them," she says. "They stand there with their arms dangling."

We can spend an entire weekend with a dozen others and not learn their names, says Lady Celestria Noel, the social editor of *Harpers & Queen*. "Introducing is one of the most important things a hostess can do."

Once upon a time, society was so small that introductions were practically unneces-



Lord Lichfield and Lady Elizabeth Anson

sary. But by our grandmother's day, a hostess knew that her role was to introduce: she was the heartbeat of the party. The best would give her guests a flying conversation-start with a mini-biography. "Typically they might say, 'This is Elizabeth Anson, who lives half in Scotland and half in Staffordshire, and this is Johnnie Bloggs who is in the Irish Guards'. Most of the time you didn't take on board what the hostess had said, but at least you had something to start people talking," Lady Elizabeth says.

Now the new informality — "it's supper, not dinner" — has conspired to make parties less fun. Today's harassed hostess arrives

hotfoot from the office, unpacking M&S canapés with junior on her hip.

What's the answer? Well, we could reclaim the art of the good introduction. "Balance is critical," says Lady Elizabeth. "There is nothing worse than the over-ambitious hostess. When we were young my brother Patrick [Lord Lichfield] and I were always being introduced by hostesses who didn't realise we were related. We would have a lovely time talking to each other."

Ewa Lewis, the social editor of *Tailor*, says: "It's an extremely delicate business. The best way to introduce is to open the conversation with an interesting statement or sentence." Lady Celestria agrees. "Give people a clue, but don't say, 'She's written a book' if it's just been remembered."

We can learn from the Americans who are brilliant at sticking their hands out, smiling broadly and saying "How-do-you-do?" My name is Bill Clinton. I'm in politics," then repeating their name two minutes later.

For those who must do their own introducing this Christmas, the best gambit is still: "And what are you doing now?" But always remember the Lady Diana Cooper lesson. Famously, at a Buckingham Palace party, she was confronted with a dowdy woman chatting about her brother. "And what is your brother doing now?" she inquired. "He is still King," came the reply.

Who'd be a butcher at Christmas?

The meat's off, says Giles Coren

THIS could be a bleak midwinter for butchers. For the traditional Christmas dinner is beginning to look like an environmental crime of monstrous proportions — the Chernobyl of festive meals. A large turkey covered with strips of bacon and chipolatas, and followed by a Christmas pudding made from beef suet, is likely to generate a different reaction, this year, from the ooohs and aahs of old.

Beef is off the Christmas list for obvious reasons, and turkey is certain to be regarded with horror after Channel 4's documentary, *The Turkey Business*, in which the bird's sex life was shown to be only marginally less appalling than its gruesome death.

This is bad news for butchers, and cannot be dismissed as humbug. "It has been pretty hard this year," says Dave Armstrong, a Dewhurst butcher in Southwark, south London. "Beef has slowed down a great deal — and the turkey programme could well affect the late rush." The British Poultry Federation were all out having Christmas lunch, but the Turkey Information Service thought the price of their gobblers would guarantee resilience. "Price wars have meant that a 12lb turkey can be bought for £5," said a spokeswoman. "But you would have to pay as much as £45 for a traditional turkey." Traditional turkey? How avant-garde can a turkey be, even if it is cheaper than catfood?

"My customers won't go near that stuff now," says Alan Whitworth, of G.W. Boggis, in Lowestoft, Suffolk. "The turkeys I sell cost 15 times as much as frozen ones — but I have to convince people that my meat is different."

Pork, too, has suffered, though for more unpredictable reasons. The film *Babe*, in which a talking



The cruellest cut at Christmas

piglet, anthropomorphised to within an ink of humanity, survives the threat of sausagedom, has been a huge success, and under-12s are boycotting pork products — either out of sentimentality, or for fear that their lunch may answer back.

At the Meat and Livestock Commission, defensiveness is the watchword. "Beef sales have dropped by 15 per cent," said a spokesman. "And while I expect this to be a temporary setback, it is undeniably bad timing for butchers. As for *Babe*, I shall go and watch it, and think of bacon sandwiches."

It is rumoured that 900 pigs were used in the film. We may choose to believe the promise that none of the extras will be spending Christmas in apple sauce, but as we sit down to a plate of the old eggs and b. on Christmas morning, will we not reflect that it is usually only Hollywood studio executives who eat film stars for breakfast?



Look back in affection: John Osborne's last play is premiered on Christmas Day. Preview page 32

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Why Britain must speak for Europe

John Redwood resists the idea of a Franco-German superstate

Should Britain mind if France and Germany wish to merge? Could Britain stop them anyway? These are not academic debates. They are the reality of modern Europe, where French and German politicians have come remarkably close to deciding to bring their countries together. France says it wants to join a currency union with Germany. This would mean that French interest rates, the budget deficit and the foreign exchange reserves would all be managed by an unelected central bank shared with Germany, based in Frankfurt.

Germany says she will only accept this monetary union if there is also a political union, which presumably means merging much of what remains of the two separate states and governments. National identity would be a matter of language and culture, but not of sovereignty.

The people are not so sure about all this. The Germans are proud of their mark. It is a colossal achievement of post-war Germany. They are right to fear that, however many controls and levers they hold over a new one, it will be less strong than the German currency alone. Nor are they quite happy about taking on more responsibilities and paying higher taxes for the less prosperous parts of Europe. They have already had to pay dearly for helping Eastern Germany.

Almost half of the French voted against the Maastricht Treaty. Today it would be more. Forces of the extreme right, based on a crude and unattractive nationalism, are poised to gain many more votes, as voters come to fear the long march of France into a merger with its neighbour. The French unions have taken up the cudgels against the budget cuts that Maastricht requires. Many French people are fed up with the deflation, the high unemployment and the high interest rates that are the result of preparing for a funeral on the death of their country, rather than for a wedding with the suitor next door.

Traditionally, it has been Britain's role and Britain's interest to balance power in Europe. We and the Dutch ended the Spanish hegemony in the 16th and 17th centuries. We and the Prussians brought France to heel when Napoleon tried to unite Europe by force of arms. We and the French twice stopped Germany taking over by military might. We have always lived by overseas trade, and have wanted an open trading system on the Continent so that we can carry our living.

Some say things are different now. They say that to have influence we should join the Franco-German merger. But as a global trader, we do not want a protectionist system. As a believer in open markets and competition, we do not welcome a Europe of the mega-state, as created by the Franco-German *démarche*.

It is still in Britain's interests to keep a balance on the Conti-

nent. Some of the architects of the new Europe have in mind once more a Europe which protects its main companies and markets from outside influences and competition. They want a Europe run by the *énarques* and officials, where many of the important decisions will be taken behind closed doors with little, if any, democratic accountability.

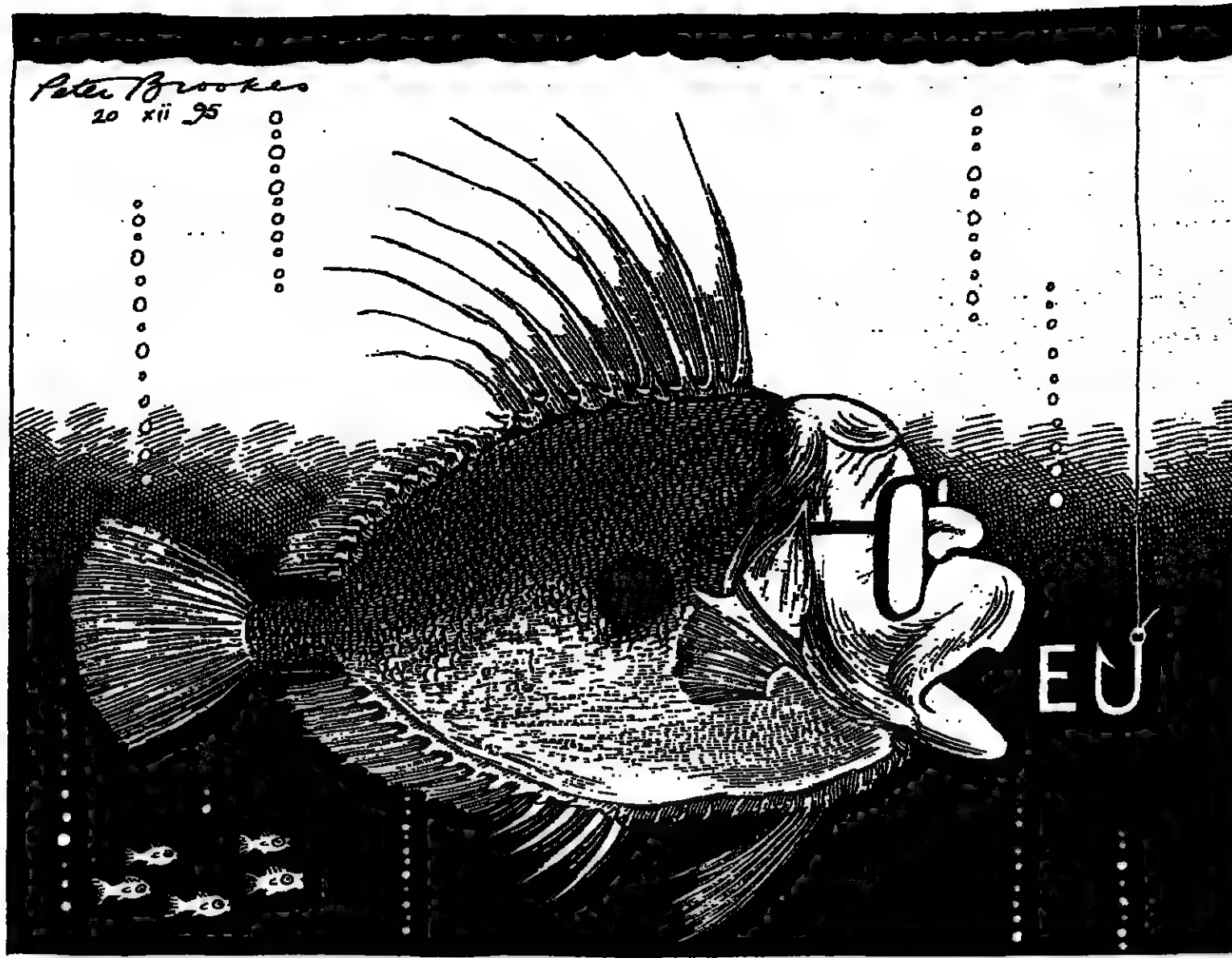
Britain believes in something different: a bold, outgoing Europe which plays a full part in the world market, a democratic Europe which respects the different strands and traditions which have been woven to make the different nations. We fear too much integration, because it would make government ever remoter from the people and it would cut across national loyalties and sentiments.

It is not the case that we need fear invasion if France, the Low Countries and Germany decide to become one. It is the case that we should fear the disruption that this might cause to those societies and economies. We have seen the streets of France the day after the election of Mitterrand, pushing people too far against a background of high unemployment and high interest rates. We know the dangers that lurk for world trade and jobs should Europe decide on a continental system of protection.

A merged Germany and France would be a colossal power, with a big economy, more people than Japan, and with nuclear weapons. It would make it very difficult for Britain to have influence in Europe. Those who say that because of this we must join it must see that this does not make it easier for us to have influence. It means we have lost the argument. If we joined the superstate, not only would we have lost decisive influence on the Continent, but we would lose it in the rest of the world as well, as our foreign exchange reserves, investments and diplomatic activity came under the control of a new state, in which we would be minority participants.

Britain owes it to the world to stand up for a separate France and Germany, by speaking out for all those millions of Frenchmen who voted "no" in the referendum and for the millions more who now oppose the policies needed in France to prepare for the single currency. We should speak out for the majority of Germans who do not want the mark to be abolished. We should speak out for all those smaller states in Europe which fear the Franco-German merger but which are appealing rather than opposing it, or which try to pretend it is not happening or that it could be in their interests.

Greece and Portugal know they will be on the edges of Europe and of little importance. Spain and Italy know they too will be excluded from the Union core. They need a Europe that works, for a Europe that can get back to work. It is Britain's task to offer this alternative.



A Christmas miracle

Tim Congdon on Britain as the home of the enterprise culture

Whatever happened to the Thatcher economic "miracle"? Has the economic performance of the Government, over its entire 16-year span, been any better than mediocre? Has the over-touted miracle turned into the widely expected mirage? Or was the Chancellor right when he said in the Budget speech that Britain can become the home of the enterprise culture in Europe?

These are basic questions about Britain's political economy. Whatever else might be said about the Government, there is no doubt that the past 16 years have been a period of radical change. Privatisation, trade union reform and deregulation have had a revolutionary impact in many industries. As the next election draws closer, political debate will be increasingly influenced by analyses of whether all the upheaval has damaged or benefited the economy.

My belief is that the supply-side reforms implemented over the past 16 years have led to an acceleration in the rate of growth of manufacturing productivity. This acceleration is clear and can hardly be disputed. Indeed it was pronounced in the 15 years to 1994 that it put Britain virtually at the top of the league of manufacturing productivity growth for the OECD area, which includes all of the world's most advanced industrial economies. The contrast with previous periods since 1945 — when Britain was routinely at the bottom of such tables — is dramatic.

In this sense the Conservative period has been a miracle. Moreover, the upturn in productivity growth extends into the early 1990s, spanning both the Thatcher and Major premiership. The key facts are set out in the accompanying table, from an article by Nicholas Oulton in the *National Institute Economic Review*.

In the period 1960-73, the growth rate of manufacturing productivity in Britain was the lowest of all the countries cited except the United States; in the period 1973-79, performance was even worse, with a sharp drop in productivity growth compared with the preceding 13 years and Britain at the very bottom of the list. In the period 1979-94, however, Britain was second out of the 12 countries (just behind Japan) and the productivity growth was four times that of 1973-79.

In his article, Mr Oulton is cautious. He notes, for example, that the growth rate in the 1960s and early

1970s was similar to that achieved under the present Government, and — on this basis — the post-1979 record would be better described as a "recovery" than an "improvement". He also warns that the gains in productivity (ie, output per worker) have not been matched by similar gains in output, because manufacturing employment has declined.

Yet Britain appears in recent years to have done well, relative both to its own past and to its industrial competitors. The level of output per head in manufacturing may now be only slightly behind that in Germany and France, and is probably somewhat above the average in the European Union. There is no longer any reason for the British to suffer a national inferiority complex on this score. (In some sectors, such as food manufacturing and the steel industry, British output per head is well ahead of that in Germany.)

The productivity recovery has transformed Britain's underlying competitiveness. Direct wage costs in Britain are much the same as in France and considerably lower than in Germany. If everything else were equal, the approximate equivalence in output per head would imply unit labour costs in Britain similar to those in France and less than those in Germany. But everything else is not equal. Largely as a result of the Tories' struggle to curb the public sec-

tor, the ratio of government expenditure to national output is now almost 10 per cent lower in Britain than in Germany, and almost 15 per cent lower than in France. The burden of some taxes — such as value added tax — is roughly equal in the three countries owing to EU harmonisation. With expenditure lower but some taxes the same, other taxes have to be much lower in Britain.

The big difference is concentrated in social security contributions, particularly those paid by employers. Whereas employers' contributions in France amount to more than 12 per cent of gross national product, and in Germany to almost 8 per cent, the figure in Britain is less than 4 per cent.

As a result, total labour costs per unit of output are significantly lower in Britain than in its continental neighbours. Logically, Britain has become host to many large direct investments from overseas, whereas Germany's direct investment in other countries in 1995 will be five times as large as other countries' direct investment in Germany.

But in one respect, the advance of British manufacturing is surprising, even paradoxical. In the early 1980s, the rhetoric of the Thatcher Government was widely regarded as anti-manufacturing and pro-services. There was alleged to be a particular bias towards financial services in the City and against basic manufactur-

ing industries. State aid to industry has been slashed. Government expenditure on trade and industry in the current financial year will be lower, even in money terms, than in 1979-80. Yet manufacturing has done better. Despite both the removal of billions of pounds of state support, manufacturing is in good shape.

Of course, the advocates of the more robust government attitude towards industry pursued over the past 16 years would see nothing strange in the conjunction of less intervention and more growth. Whereas in the 1970s industry was being killed by the kindness of excessive state hand-outs, in the 1980s it has been revitalised by the harshness of a more free-market approach. Anti-interventionists would say that the elimination of state support ought to be followed by a shift of resources from inefficient to efficient industries, with positive effects on productivity. And this, it seems, is what has happened.

All the same, the notion that Britain's economic miracle (if such it be) is substantially a manufacturing miracle may be difficult to accept. Surely, the Government's critics will protest, Thatcherism wasn't supposed to benefit blue-collar workers and manufacturers in the North and Scotland, but white-collar workers and merchant bankers in London and the South-East? Can the stereotype be so thoroughly misguided?

As so often, the stereotype is wrong and reappraisal is long overdue. The improvement in manufacturing has now extended over such a long period and been corroborated by so many statistics that it cannot be denied. However much the critics dislike the facts, they speak for themselves.

But a puzzle remains. The undoubted progress in manufacturing — where output per head has virtually doubled since 1979 — does not seem to have been accompanied by a comparably spectacular improvement in living standards. As manufacturing accounts for only a fifth of national output, the manufacturing miracle has not been enough to achieve a more general economic miracle.

So the next questions are "why has the surge in manufacturing, an area traditionally seen as Britain's weakness, failed to boost productivity in the whole economy?" and "what, if anything, has gone so badly wrong elsewhere that the gains in manufacturing appear to have been dissipated?" I shall address these questions in a second article shortly.

Output per manhour in manufacturing: percentage growth per annum

	1960-73	1973-79	1979-89	1979-94
United States	4.28	1.41	2.34	1.47
Canada	4.44	2.03	1.49	1.81
Japan	9.59	5.15	4.58	4.18
Belgium	8.89	5.53	4.16	3.73
Denmark	3.22	3.08	1.28	1.58
France	3.36	4.39	3.28	3.04
Germany	5.71	4.21	1.59	2.51
Italy	8.14	6.50	3.86	3.51
Netherlands	7.15	5.32	3.40	3.04
Norway	4.69	2.21	2.03	2.06
Sweden	4.25	2.55	2.33	2.07
United Kingdom	4.14	1.01	4.13	3.95

Source: US Department of Labor, BLS News, September 1995

Digging in

THE PRINCE OF WALES has suffered a setback in trying to advance the organic cause of Highgrove, his estate in Gloucestershire. One of Britain's foremost organic farmers, Helen Browning, has turned down an offer from the Prince of a chance to take charge of his farm operation.

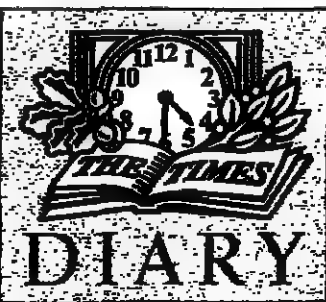
Ms Browning's techniques of muck and mystery have long been admired by the Prince who has installed his own organic sewage treatment plant at Highgrove. She runs a farm of more than 1,000 acres on the Wiltshire Downs, with dairy cows, sheep, free-range hens and a herd of muck-shuffling Saddleback pigs, which are admired by the local fraternity.

But, after mulling over the considerable advantages of a link with Highgrove, she is said to have decided that a commitment of a couple of days a week away from her home farm would be too much. "I don't think I am prepared to say anything at the moment," was all she would say.

Land agents in Gloucestershire say, however, that the Prince has yet to accept her refusal, and is still trying to persuade her to lead the Highgrove team. They also claim

that the farm manager David Wilson is none too happy about the prospect of a new boss. "The Prince's chief land agent, from the firm Smith Gore, is retiring soon though," said one. "So it's a good chance to get in some new blood."

● An absurdity of royal correspondents gathered yesterday for an emotional Christmas lunch at Christopher's in Covent Garden, where James Whitaker, Andrew Morton, Richard Kay and Antho-



ny Holden toyed with turkey while discussing the Princess of Wales. Today's royal luncheon will concentrate on the husband: the Prince of Wales's private secretary, Commander Richard Ayland, will be joined at his favourite restaurant by Jonathan Dimbleby, puppet of "the enemy".

Aghast

I HOPE William Cash, son of Euro-sceptic MP Bill Cash and one of Liz Hurley's regular escorts, does not inflict on her the behaviour which shocked an entire restaurant on Monday night. Au Bon Accueil restaurant in Chelsea Green was lively, customers were enjoying their food and Cash junior was tired and emotional.

Halfway into an interminable tale about life in Los Angeles, Cash

went green, then white, and caused a mess all over the tablecloth. And then continued with his story.

Jail bird

THE PRISONS Minister, Ann Widdecombe, is throwing herself into her job with gusto. If her appearance on Monday's BBC news to talk about problems at Holloway is anything to go by, she looked fit for a part in the Australian soap about female prisoners, *Cell Block H*.

The minister has been experimenting with a number of styles recently, but consultants were taken aback by her choice of black jacket, enormous floppy bow-tie, and by jet black hair with a frumpy



Prisoner Widdecombe

fringe. "Looking like the jailer doesn't help her image," commented Mary Spillane, the parliamentary image-maker.

Tub-u-like

THE FESTIVE season is not swinging in quite customary fashion for Maureen Lipman. At the Foyles luncheon yesterday to launch her memoir *You Can Read Me Like a Book*, she was left sitting by herself for 15 minutes because her neighbours Ned Sherrin and Jane Asher were late.

But she hopes things will look up in the new year. "Christmas will just be with my mother and the children and their various lanky appendages. But this morning I was rung up by a friend who asked if I wanted to go and sit around eating Chinese takeaway in a hot tub — which is not easy to refuse."

Looking back

TRUE TO his beery tastes, Kenneth Clarke has chosen a Christmas card of Gladstone toting at the dispatch box. His shopping has been equally nostalgic: the Chancellor was yesterday in the Regent Street branch of *Past Times*, specialists in historical replicas. He bought a Tudor-style embroi-



Clarke's retro card

dered waistcoat, a woollen cardigan based on 17th-century Persian wall-hangings and a floral stole, which a fellow shopper described as "a bit arty". One purchase raised suggestions that Downing Street might benefit from his munificence. He bought a doormat, modelled on one owned by Samuel Johnson and inscribed "Here lives a very fine cat indeed". Humphrey is in for a treat.

Alan Coren



■ Have you ever had a ding-dong with an angel?

She was born to ding-dong merrily on high. That was her life's work. That was the career her Creator had marked out for her, ten thousand miles from Cricklewood. "You will be flown to Cricklewood," he murmured, tenderly but firmly, "you will be placed on high, and once you are up there, you will ding-dong merrily."

I may be taking small liberties here, I do not know exactly what he said, I wasn't there, but I feel fairly confident that he said something, you cannot sit all day in the middle of the South China Sea knocking out electronic fairies without the work getting to you a bit, especially if you cannot talk to the assembler next to you, they are strict disciplinarians in Taiwan, turn to your neighbour for a natter and you will be out on your ear. It is therefore not unlikely that you would murmur to the fairy between your fingers, to stop yourself going nuts.

The scene now shifts to Camden Market, last Saturday, whither a man has gone whose old fairy appears to have done a runner: for it is one of the Parkinsonian laws of Christmas that work expands so as to require twice the time available for its completion, make that thrice if the work involves a tree. For example, because you are an old hand at the Yule game, you allow an extra hour for rushing out to buy new lights, only to find that the old lights actually work, for once, so you cry "Wow! Terrific! I have been granted a whole extra hour to rush out and buy the chocolate Santas I thought we already had!" and then you reach into the lights box to get the fairy to put on the top of the tree, but she has gone, so not only does the whole extra hour go in looking where she isn't, you now have to find three new hours to rush out and buy another fairy.

One of these is spent in not discovering them in any local shop, a second is spent parking just outside Wolverhampton, this being as close as you can to Camden Market on pre-Christmas Saturday, and the third is spent trudging through the stalls until you find the only man who sells fairies. He does not, though, sell fairies like your old fairy, who, Yule in, Yule out, just clung there silently blessing the household with a wonky wand, he sells only fairies who sing *Ding-Dong Merry on High*. "They got this chip in," he explains. "They wobble every hour, on the hour."

So I gave him a tenner, and took her home. She said nothing in the car. She said nothing when I put her on the tree. And then, after about ten minutes, she sang "Ding-dong merrily on high". After another ten minutes, she was still singing it. I took her down again, and, with this technical expertise I have, shook her. She did not stop. I tapped her lightly against the banister. "Ding-dong merrily on high!" she sang.

This was bad news. There were 21 days to go until Twelfth Night, and there was quite enough coming up in those 21 days which would threaten to drive us all barking mad, without having an incontinent Chinese soprano to help out.

I took her into the kitchen, put her on the table, and removed her clothes. She had, sorry about this, a little hitch between her legs, which, it would seem, led to her works. So — this is the fourth hour by now, and, if I haven't mentioned it, I had forgotten, while out, to buy the chocolate Santas — I put a screwdriver to the hatch. It was a bit unsettling, performing major abdominal surgery on a patient singing "Ding-dong merrily on high!" but I persevered, even when I discovered that I could not open the hatch without first prising her legs off. I would have unscrewed them, but they didn't unscrew, they had little rivets. I could now get to her innards. They had a tiny digital-watch battery in them. I took it out. She shut up.

All I had to do now was get her legs back on. I got one leg back on. Ask me where the other little rivet went. Ask me how long I took to look for it. Unsuccessfully. But I put her back on the top of the tree anyway. No one would notice, right up there.

I'd just finished when Mrs Coren came through the front door, lugging shopping bags. "Why has the fairy got only one leg?" she inquired.

"I bet you forgot to buy chocolate Santas," I said.



BOTTOMLEY AND DAVIS

A bad decision by both politician and regulator

Virginia Bottomley's decision yesterday not to sack Peter Davis, the lottery regulator, was said to be "finely balanced". If so, she brought the weight of her judgment down on the wrong side. Mr Davis has been guilty of bad judgment on an issue central to his public function. That does not mean that he is corrupt, only that he is tarnished. A tarnished regulator will not quell the unease that surrounds the lottery. A nationalised gambling operation, which necessarily has potential to bring great benefit and grave disrepute, should not only be clean and impeccably ruled: it must be seen to be so.

A national lottery has three potentially dangerous characteristics. It is a monopoly; it can be rigged; and it involves the handling of huge sums of money. Moreover, of the industries that operate within the law, gambling is the world's toughest and most ruthless. So whoever is appointed to police the National Lottery has to be the equal of those under regulation.

Mr Davis, the Director-General of Ofst since its inception, has proved unequal to the task. His acceptance of free flights and foreign hospitality from GTEch, a partner in the Camelot consortium which operates the lottery, displayed a woeful lack of judgment — particularly since, as has now emerged, he was advised by the Government not to accept the offers. There is no suggestion that he was corrupted by these favours; but in his position as a regulator he should never have allowed himself to be in such a position.

Because of the nature of the gambling industry, its policemen have to be sophisticated, hard and savvy, with not a trace of the naive or vulnerable. The head of Ofst should display the iron judgment that working in such an area demands. In both his actions and responses Mr Davis failed in this regard and should have been replaced. There are wider lessons, too, from this embarrassment. Should one man or

woman, however strong, be expected to stand up to the full wheedling and lobbying force of a giant industry? In America, panels of officials are appointed to regulate utilities. This helps to prevent fights between the regulator and the regulated being portrayed as clashes of personality. It would also have made Mr Davis's action less likely: peer pressure would have been brought to bear on a member of a panel taking unwise actions. Had such pressure failed, the removal of one panel member would not have seemed as drastic as the sacking of a regulator working alone.

There remains the question of whether the person who awards a contract should also oversee its operation. Mr Davis has a vested interest both in Camelot's success and in the reputation of GTEch remaining unblemished. Should it ever turn out that GTEch had acted dishonestly, that would bring Mr Davis's judgment into doubt. In the current rail privatisation, a franchiser awards franchises and a regulator then regulates the operators. Such a distinction is a healthy one.

The director-generals of all the regulatory bodies should be subject to much clearer rules about what is proper and improper conduct. In some American states, regulators have to make public every contact with each company that comes under their jurisdiction. Such openness ought to be routine for an operation that is designed to act in the interests of the public.

Instead in Britain we have secrecy and fog. Mr Davis's contract remains private and his guidelines unclear. All that he has agreed now to do is to seek guidance from the Department of National Heritage if potential conflicts of interest arise again. Given that last time the department gave him advice, he ignored it, this assurance fails to inspire confidence. So does Mrs Bottomley's decision to retain him.

KABUL CRUCIBLE

In the dust of Afghanistan grow the seeds of Islamic terror

When the United Nations negotiated the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the long-combative country, free from foreign forces for the first time in a decade, looked set for some sort of political and economic revival. Seven years later, as our correspondent reports today, its capital lies in ruins. Hospitals, schools and mosques have been destroyed. Kabul is as shattered and desolate as Dresden after the bomber raids. Thousands of civilians have been killed by rockets raining down on the main cities; women and children have been mutilated by mines strewn in millions. The warring factions show no sign of readiness for peace. Afghanistan as a political entity has virtually ceased to exist.

From time to time the world has looked, incredulously, at the destruction wrought by the guerrilla gangs once hailed as freedom fighters. A United Nations peace plan was agreed which called for the resignation of President Rabbani and transitional arrangements to accommodate the demands of the feuding factions. But ceaseless warfare has brought all plans to naught. The President refused to quit. The factions, each professing a religious zeal that thrives on intransigence, would not make common cause. Weapons, purchased with drug money, continued to pour in to add to the pile left behind by the Russians.

Meanwhile, a new force has entered the confused battlefield: the Taliban, Islamic "students" professing an interest only in stopping the heroin trade and disarming the warlords. Their sweeping initial gains, meeting little resistance, took everyone by surprise. But their record has been less impressive. In those swaths of country they

now control, they enforce a repressive regime. Their peaceful credentials have been undermined by their tactics on reaching Kabul, where the rump Government has put up stout resistance: they have fired rockets into civilian sectors as ruthlessly as Gulbuddin Hekmatyay, the warlord who was also once on the brink of capturing Kabul. And it is increasingly clear that the Taliban, far from being indigenous saviours, are largely the creation of Pakistan, desperate to ensure a friendly regime on its northwestern frontier.

Given the long history of tribal warfare and the remoteness of the country, there is a tendency to shrug at the endemic war and turn to more soluble problems. But the Afghan disaster is poisoning not only regional stability but inter-state relations on a much wider scale. Tajikistan is still struggling to contain the attacks of fundamentalist rebels taking shelter across the border. Pakistan is being drawn, inexorably, into the maelstrom. All intelligence reports on spreading Islamic militancy in the Middle East point to the common Afghanistan link, the place where Mujahidin have been trained and are still drawing strength and inspiration.

As often in these wretched situations, it is the Red Cross which hangs on, attempting to alleviate suffering when most others have abandoned the country. The Red Cross is doing a magnificent job in keeping going hospitals overwhelmed by casualties. Amid warfare, it is attempting to create civilian employment and reconciliation. Today it launches its Christmas appeal for the victims of this forgotten war: it is a call to which the world should respond generously.

MUD, MUD, GLORIOUS MUD

One creature's sticky wicket is a heavenly hippo track

Into each life some rain must fall. And this usually happens just as England look like sneaking a draw from the jaws of defeat, or the converse, in a Test match. The torrential rains in South Africa have washed out the first two Tests in the current series and exasperated tourists who have flown to South Africa to escape the British winter. And when it has not been pouring, these sunshine swallow tourists have watched drizzle sweeping in from the ocean in fits and spouts, blinding the batsmen, loosening the grips of the bowlers, testing the pedantry of the umpires, and keeping the groundstaff running on and off with covers.

"Rain stopped play" used to be an incantation peculiarly associated with English cricket, on the lines of straight bats, keeping one's eye on the ball and sticky wickets. And traditionally Old Trafford used to be the ground for dogged masochists who preferred their cricket under a car-wash. But research by Simon Wilde on our sports pages demonstrates that Leeds and then Lord's have taken over from Manchester as the home wet-weather grounds. And that new sucking and squeeze technology for mopping up wet weather has made England a land where rain now seldom stops play. Sri Lanka, forced to stage matches during the monsoon to accommodate the dates of senior cricketing nations, is the wettest. In one Test at Kandy, only 12 overs were played over five days.

The final two Test matches in South Africa take place at Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

two of the driest grounds in the world. But meteorology is one of the many variables that make cricket the most interesting game. It would be a shame to have undeviating snooker-table wickets for the South African debut of Paul Adams, the frog-in-a-blender, back-breaking twister of phenomenal Chinamen, who introduces danger and difference to professional cricket.

This dim damp for cricketers has also brought life back to other exotic creatures of South Africa. Four years of drought have parched the land. This deluge has reintroduced green to the parched veld, and forced new shoots of maize, sunflowers and groundnuts. The rain, which has come down so hard that people are having to jump into rivers to stop themselves drowning, has saved the hippopotamus in the Kruger Park and other game reserves. These gentle leviathans with huge heads suffer in the heat, as do pigs and other animals that wallow rather than sweat. They are improbably thin-skinned, and are plagued by parasites when they cannot cool off in water or, at the worst, mud. New rains have made the hyenas frisky; new grass makes longer-living animal babies for lunch.

Complaining about rain is an English hobby as peculiar as cricket. But four years without it would change our complaint, as well as turning Yorkshire taps as dry as the Kalahari. May the cricketers enjoy uninterrupted play in South Africa over Christmas. But may there also be enough Kruger mist to keep the spinners and the hippos happy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Giving new hope to Brixton area

From Councillor Charles Elphicke

Sir, I watched from Lambeth Town Hall as Brixton was disrupted by the mob that looted shops, turned over cars and threw petrol bombs (reports, December 14, 15; leading article, December 15). It was not only the prospect of Brixton that went up in smoke: the effects will reverberate throughout the borough of Lambeth. In my view there has been a clear failure of policy. Brixton City Challenge, which was introduced in 1985 to stimulate investment in the area, has failed to encourage local entrepreneurs. Government money in such deprived inner-city areas must be targeted to assist local start-up businesses to get through their difficult first year of trading.

Only by encouraging local people and assisting them in marketing their products will an employment base arise. Local opportunities will result in less vandalism and tension.

Government money should be spent on encouraging greater employment not just in Brixton but in the other deprived areas of Lambeth. That would sustain employment prospects rather than the "here today, gone tomorrow" jobs created by doling out government money.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES ELPHICKE,
London Borough of Lambeth,
Members' Room, Town Hall,
Brixton Hill, SW2,
December 18.

From Earl Russell

Sir, Those who remember the Brixton troubles of 1981 will remember the trouble caused by the "sus laws" under which people could be arrested on suspicion. I am surprised to find that in Clause 7 of the Asylum and Immigration Bill the Home Secretary proposes to introduce a power for constables to arrest people without warrant on suspicion of their being illegal immigrants.

Is it to be imagined that sensible police officers will wish to use these powers in Brixton?

Yours sincerely,
RUSSELL,
(Liberal Democrat Social
Security spokesperson),
House of Lords,
December 18.

From Mr Stephen Perry

Sir, Employed people tend to have neither the time, inclination nor the need to involve themselves in riots.

Until London-based businesses find a mechanism to employ young males from ethnic minorities, the potential for confrontations such as those we witnessed in Brixton will continue to exist.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN PERRY,
London Export (UK) Limited,
7 Swallow Place, W1,
December 15.

Costs against JPs

From the Chairman of the Central Council of Magistrates' Courts Committees

Sir, In the light of your correspondence (December 4, 6, 12, 13) on the award of costs against justices, it might also be appropriate to draw attention to the administrative problems that can arise in this respect for magistrates' courts committees.

The Justices of the Peace Act 1979 (as amended) provides that cost orders should be met from local funds. This raises two areas of concern: the possible inability of a magistrates' courts committee to manage its budget effectively in a cash-limited environment; and the danger that consent orders will be signed in order to negate costs but at the expense of justice.

At our conference in London last week, Mr Jonathan Evans, Parliamentary Secretary at the Lord Chancellor's Department, recognised our continuing concern. Constructive discussions are urgently needed.

Yours faithfully,
PETER WRIGHT,
Chairman,
Central Council of Magistrates' Courts Committees,
79 New Cavendish Street, W1,
December 14.

Wheat tax

From Mr R. B. Coles

Sir, The European Commission, with no notice to the farming community and with virtually no press reporting, has just imposed a tax on wheat exports from the EU of £8.50 a tonne.

The effect of this will be to distort the grain market, increase world cereal prices, and thus make imports, mostly for the poorer nations, more expensive.

Is this what is intended?

Yours sincerely,
R. B. COLES,
Western Court,
Bishop's Sutton,
Aldershot, Hampshire,
December 15.

Business letters, page 25

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Cuts threat to BBC World Service

From Mr G. H. Wigglesworth

Sir, I am alarmed by Peter Barnard's report (Arts, December 7) that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office proposes to reduce its investment in the World Service of the BBC over the next three years.

Your headline says, "A national asset under threat". Those who live and work abroad and listen to World Service broadcasts every day would see it as an international asset of unique value to those who want to hear the facts.

We have only to compare overseas broadcasts from some other countries to realise how free from propaganda the BBC World Service broadcasts are.

The threatened cut would be an act of treachery towards all those listeners who hear only doctored news from their national broadcasting stations and who rely on the BBC for the truth.

Yours faithfully,
G. H. WIGGLESWORTH,
55 Canonbury Park South, N1,
December 8.

From the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association

Sir, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has recently announced the closure from March 31, 1996, of Radio Canada International, its counterpart to the BBC's World Service. Inaugurated in 1945, RCI has played a major role in spreading free and fair information round the world, and it will be greatly missed.

Canadians, who are among the richest people in the world both in per capita income and in the values that underpin a free society, owe it to far poorer and less privileged people to share their access to accurate and unbiased information. Their sane voice and their experience of living decently with ethnic diversity are needed in many areas of conflict.

Dispute over 'safe' drinking limits

From Mr Andrew Barr

Sir, You were quite right in your editorial ("Cheers, Mr Dorrell", December 13; see also letters, December 14, 18) to draw attention to the arbitrary nature of "safe" drinking limits. In the early 1980s British doctors were recommending that men drink a maximum of 56 units a week.

This was lowered to 21 by a working party in 1987. I was later informed by one member of this group that the new figure had simply been "pulled out of the air".

I wonder, however, whether you were right to suggest that the limit was set artificially low in an attempt to exaggerate the number of problem drinkers and thus extract more money from the Government "to combat this abuse". People do not usually tell market researchers the truth about their alcohol consumption. Official drinking statistics, which are based on market research, tend only to account for 60 per cent of the alcohol that Customs and Excise knows has been sold. At whatever level the safe limit is set, the number of people believed officially to drink more than they should will always be too low.

The limits were set at 21 units for men and 14 for women in 1987 because doctors were convinced of a hypothesis called the "Ledermann theory", according to which the amount of harm caused by alcohol in any one country or society is directly related to the average consumption of that community. From this it follows that if you can reduce the amount that most people drink by persuading them to keep below a notional "safe limit", the scale of alcohol-related problems will also be reduced.

Although the Ledermann theory has never been proved, its adoption by the medical establishment explains not only the promulgation in Britain of ludicrously low "sensible drinking"

The CBC, put in an impossible position by the cuts in their funding, have been forced to announce this decision. The responsibility, however, lies with Canada's Government. Parliament and people, and in particular with those who have a vision of Canada as something more than a rich man building a high wall around his property and disregarding the poverty and despair outside.

Radio Canada International had already been damaged over the years by progressive spending cuts. Britain should take care that it is not going down the same route.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH SMITH,
Secretary-General,
Commonwealth Broadcasting Association,
152-156 Great Portland Street, W1,
December 15.

From Dr John E. Dayton

Sir, I really must take issue with Ms Brenda Maddox and her article in praise of the BBC World Service (Media and Marketing, December 13). Having lived and worked overseas for the last 40 years, I suggest that Ms Maddox goes to some remote part of the world where there are no newspapers and tries to survive on the boring, politically correct rubbish the BBC puts out.

She would soon give up listening to the dreary *Play of the Week*, *Anything Goes* and poor Edward Greenfield tediously discussing obscure operas and even more obscure composers.

Thank God we now have satellite TV, with CNN, NBC and the excellent EuroNews. I suggest that it is time to close down this obsolete descendant of *Forces Favourites*.

I remain, yours sincerely,
JOHN DAYTON,
Jardin del Sol 136,
38330 Tenerife, Canary Islands,
December 17.

levels but also the obsession of the World Health Organisation with the idea that less necessarily means better.

Yours sincerely,
ANDREW BARR,
51 Donaldson Road, NW6.

From Mr R. H. Keys

Sir, Although drink-driving is an evil, Mr Graham Buxton, of the Campaign Against Drinking and Driving (letter, December 18), must not be allowed to misuse statistics so crassly without challenge. The fact that 14 per cent of drivers breath-tested by the police are over the legal alcohol limit is no warrant for his statement that "perhaps 14 out of every 100 drivers on our roads at any one time could be over the limit".

The police are supposed only to breath-test people when they are driving badly, or when they have other cause to believe that the driver is at fault. Breath-testing of drivers at 8.30am on a busy commuter road on a weekday morning would be extremely unlikely to reveal anybody over the limit. Mr Buxton's exaggeration is typical of the hysteria that in Britain surrounds the subject of drinking.

Yours sincerely,
R. H. KEYS,
11 Finchley Avenue,
Chelmsford, Essex,
December 19.

From Mr Jad Adams

Sir, My partner has shown years of self-restraint in not having that third glass of wine. Now she intends to make up for it by drinking all the ones she missed.

Yours sincerely,
JAD ADAMS,
2 Kings Garth,
29 London Road, SE23.

gations under the treaty and have stood aside, but then, as Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, said in the House of Commons on August 3, 1914, "we should... sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world".

War, not neutrality, was declared the following day; the rest is history. Stirling stuff, which rather puts in the shade the 1972 treaty on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping.

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH ELLISON DAVIS,
Brahms Straat 2,
1077 HG Amsterdam,
The Netherlands,
December 14.

From Mr Jack Sewell

Sir, Unlike Mr Barney Alterman, who has had to pay 8p to the Inland Revenue, my wife, having recently cashed in about £2,000 worth of National Savings, has now received a cheque for 20p more.

In a full and detailed letter, the Head of Operations explains that ministers had decided to compensate savers for an error in the published RPI figure of -0.01 per cent, no matter how small the amount or the cost of sending it out.

Yours faithfully,
JACK SEWELL,
6 St Nicholas Court,
Childe Okeford, Dorset.

Funeral fashion past and present

From the Reverend Dr Peter Jupp, Director, National Funerals College

Sir, The Duke of Westminster's 1889 letter on "Overcrowded cemeteries" (On This Day, December 9) is of both historical and contemporary significance.

The Duke's advocacy of "earth to earth" (ie, coffinless) burial was not new. It had been vigorously canvassed from 1873 by the surgeon Francis Seymour Haden. Queen Victoria's surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, formed the Cremation Society in 1874 and cremation was legalised ten years later.

The Duke selected the examples of Brompton cemetery (opened 1840) and Tower Hamlets (1841) which, despite being at the extreme ends of the social scale, both suffered from overcrowding and financial difficulties, to argue for burial reform. But he was not wholly disinterested. His letter praised "natural cremation", or decomposition, but he was already a convert to technological cremation. He had previously contributed to Working Crematorium and, in May 1890, was to become President of the Manchester Crematorium Company, which opened England's second crematorium in 1892.

His theological position supported his cause. The belief he expresses in his letter that "man is not a body endowed with an immortal soul, but rather a spiritual being who has a body and who can never die" fits cremation practice like a glove. Burial practice had traditionally fitted the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

Several of the changes the Duke called for came about in time. Mourning fashion had begun to moderate earlier in the decade according to the declining sales figures for Courtlaids' crepe, and declined further during the First World War. Increasing use of cremation after the Second World War cut funeral expenses for many. As for land-use, the Audit Commission estimated in 1989 that cremation saves 200 acres each year. Cemeteries cover more than 16,000 acres of England and Wales.

The Duke's letter is of particular interest now, as our funeral industries and services are experiencing enormous change. This year, *Which?*, the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission have all investigated funeral costs. Bereavement support and funeral-reform groups have drawn attention to people's needs at funeral times and to the importance of greater price and ownership transparency among funeral-directing firms.

Most typically, 30 per cent of people still prefer burial but local authorities are running short of burial land. Within three years five London boroughs will have no space for new graves.

To attempt a solution the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration has just published its survey of public attitudes, *Reusing Old Graves*, a policy to which nearly three fifths of respondents gave support. The challenge of 1889 may yet be met.

Yours faithfully,
PETER JUPP, Director,
The National Funerals College,
Braddon House,
High Street, Duddingston,
Stamford, Lincolnshire,
December 11.

Sport on TV

From Mr Gareth Boote

Sir, Mr Ralph Glazer (letter, December 18) wonders whether the races will be stopped for commercial breaks when ITV takes over the broadcasting of Formula One. Has he not noticed the saturation of sponsors' advertisements on the cars, the drivers and the track?

Formula One is the commercial break.

Yours faithfully,
GARETH BOOTE,
13 Bathaston Grove,
Leigh, Lancashire,
December 18.

Penny wise

From Mr Peter Wells

Sir, The birth of the euro in 1999 (report, December 18) will, as your columns have suggested, bring attendant semantic problems.

Some countries, for various reasons, will fail to meet the criteria and consequently be unable to euro-nate. They will be diagnosed, one presumes, as suffering from NSE, or non-specific eurothrids, a disabling complaint, but not irreversible.

What concerns me more is the threat to the British use of philology to disguise the fact that they are not exempt from the need to exercise their bodily functions. "Spending a penny", for example, has an impeccable record for saving English-speakers from embarrassment.

It should be abundantly clear to the European Commissioners that "spending a euro" cannot possibly serve this end, since the word resembles too closely the very function it is intended to conceal.

On this ground alone I feel we should be fully justified in exercising our right to secede from the contemplated union.

Yours faithfully,
P. P. L. WELLS,
15 Sunnyside Road, Worcester,
December 19.

London treaties

From Mr K. C. E. Ellison Davis

Sir, As some of your correspondents (December 14) point out, there is not a single treaty of London. Leaving aside those of 1827 (Greek independence), 1852 (Schleswig-Holstein question), and 1867 (neutralisation of Luxembourg), most of which are now merely dates in history books, Britain's ratification of the Treaty of London of 1839, with its explicit guarantee of Belgian neutrality mentioned by Mr R. Bowden-Williams, ultimately led to the United Kingdom's involvement in the First World War.

Britain could have ignored its obli-

Penny foolish

From Mr Robert M. Brodman

Sir, I am most grateful to Mr Barney Alterman (letter, December 13) for paying his tax amounting to 8p, as this apparently enabled Mr R. R. Martin, Principal Finance Officer of Inland Revenue, to send a repayment cheque of 8p in respect of income tax which the Inland Revenue calculated was due to my late wife.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT BRODMAN,
The Cottage,
Chapel Green,
Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk,
December 13.

OBITUARIES

MARY LASCELLES

Mary Lascelles, FBA, literary critic, teacher and poet, died on December 10 aged 95. She was born on February 7, 1900.

MOST of Mary Lascelles's professional career was spent in Oxford as English tutor at Somerville College. She was one of those dons who leave an indelible impression on their pupils.

Mary Madge Lascelles was born on the Caribbean island of Grenada where her father, William Horace, a younger son of the 4th Earl of Harewood, had an estate on which he grew sugar, cocoa and limes. Although her parents returned to England when their first child was three, Lascelles was to keep with her all her life her West Indian memories of colour and light.

After some instruction from governesses, she went at the age of 15 to Sherborne Girls' School and then on in 1919 to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. She taught briefly at Royal Holloway College in London University and in 1931 was appointed tutor in English at Somerville College, where she was made a fellow the following year. She remained a tutor for 30 years and served as Vice-Principal from 1947, only giving up that post in 1960 on becoming a university lecturer. Her promotion to a Readership in 1966, entailing the loss of both tutorial teaching and of her rooms in college, gave less pleasure than her election to the British Academy in 1962. She retired in 1967.

A rigorous scholar, Lascelles's commanding values were order, clarity



and precision — both in thought and language. Her abhorrence was jargon: the jargon of the professional literary critic most of all. Jane Austen, whose art she depicted as a growth from critical discrimination to human insight, was her model. But the authors who held her love were the large, generous, humane figures of Shakespeare, Johnson and Scott.

A study of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* appeared in 1953, followed in 1971 by an edition of Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. A collection of essays published in 1972 under the characteristic "Lascellesian" title of *Notions and Facts* contains her Walter Scott lectures,

given in Edinburgh in 1960. Her last major work, *The Story-teller Retires* (1980), is a study of the historical imagination in Scott, Stevenson and Kipling.

But the book with which Lascelles made her name in 1939, *Jane Austen and Her Art*, was her first publication and remains her best-known work. Written after R. W. Chapman's pioneering editions of Austen's novels and letters, it set a new standard in Austen criticism, applying Henry James's ideas on the art of the novel. Its appearance was greeted by an unprecedented first leader and a lengthy review in the *Times Literary Supplement*; more than 50 years later the book still sells well.

A fascination with the figure and the art of the story-teller was lifelong. What always interested Lascelles was the writer's dependence on a range of allusion shared with reader and society: what she feared was the loss of the community of shared reference. As a scholar, she knew herself to be "caught in the web of words", and her writing was rich in allusion. But the poems she wrote in later life speak of unheard words, of words that "must perish in air", of disenchantment with words.

The waste of words pained Lascelles and caused a corresponding terror in her pupils, only reinforced by the occasional arch insight that she granted into her own "errors" of how, returning on the Paddington to Oxford train it had been reassuring to find a carriage marked "Reading", but how vexing it had been to discover it was not set aside for passengers wishing to

settle undisturbed with their books; or again of how, as an assistant lecturer at Royal Holloway College, she had once reached the end of a lecture on Shakespeare only to realise that she had throughout consistently misnamed its tragic hero, and so consequently heard herself announcing to her students, by way of conclusion: "For Apollo read Othello."

The mixture of awe and anxiety that she inspired remained undiminished even once it was intimated that a pupil might call her by her Christian name. Invitations to tea (at precisely half-past-four) in her north Oxford house were received with greater alarm than supervision sessions because they meant more opportunities for blunders — not only the fear of solecism but of spilling jam on the white tablecloth (and it always did spill), or drinking one's tea too quickly, or the awkward question coming just as the scones had been bitten into: "Do tell me, which do you say, relatives or relations?"

Yet such memories do not tell it all. Lascelles was a strong influence over many years on Somerville and a generous benefactor to the college and English Faculty libraries. Her severity as a teacher was matched by great kindnesses and a pride in the subsequent fortunes of her pupils. In later years, as she struggled with increasing blindness and the fear of having outlived her usefulness, she saw with distaste the rise of a world of doctoral researchers and career academics. But never once did she withhold her support or encouragement.

Mary Lascelles never married.

JOHN BUSHELL

John Bushell, CMG, former British Ambassador to Vietnam and to Pakistan, died on December 14 aged 76. He was born on September 27, 1919.

JOHN BUSHELL was part of the support team behind the Wooden Horse Escape in the Second World War. He was among those who tirelessly vaulted day after day over the improvised "horse" while three of their colleagues beneath the apparatus grimly tunneled their way out of Stalag Luft III.

Bushell himself, however, was under orders to stay put. A German speaker, he was recruited by intelligence to gather what information he could both from the prison guards and from freshly captured Allied prisoners, then to transmit it through coded letters home to his family.

A bomber pilot, he had been shot down in 1940 while on his first mission over Nazi Germany. He had not even been at the controls, but had been sitting beside a more senior colleague as they ran

into heavy gunfire above Mannheim. The hapless young pilot officer was to spend the rest of the Second World War in prison camps, studying to help to pass the time, before eventually being repatriated by the Russians. He was held for several weeks by the Red Army and had to endure a gruelling forced march before eventually reaching Allied lines.

John Christopher Wyndowe Bushell was born at Harrow-on-the-Hill. He was the son of a colonel in the Royal Engineers who spent much of his career in British India. It was from there that the young Bush returned to boarding school in Britain between the wars.

He won an exhibition to Winchester, then another to Clare College, Cambridge, to read history. There he joined the University Air Squadron, with the result that he was called up by the RAF as soon as the war broke out — with only his freshman year at university behind him.

On eventually being demobilised, Bushell rejected the chance of returning to



finish his degree. Instead he was accepted by the Diplomatic Service through what was known as the "country house" method — a series of tests and interviews spread over several days to establish whether one was made of the right stuff.

He was posted first to Moscow at the start of the

Cold War, then went to Rome and in 1953-54, by now a first secretary, was sent to the Nato Defence College based in Paris. That seemed to determine the shape of his future career which henceforth had a military slant to it.

He was serving in Baghdad in the late 1950s as deputy

secretary-general of the Central Treaty Organisation (formerly known as the Baghdad Pact), when the pro-Western Iraqi Government was overthrown and the young King Faisal was murdered. But Bushell was fortunately on leave in this country at the time.

He was less fortunate, however, after his transfer to Turkey in the same post. While driving home in Ankara after a picnic, Bushell was severely injured in a road accident and had to be evacuated to the British Military Hospital in Cyprus. He only just survived and suffered from a stiff arm and leg for the rest of his life.

He was in Aden as political adviser to the British Commander-in-Chief Middle East, 1961-64, then joined the UK delegation to Nato in Brussels, 1964-68, before being seconded to the Cabinet Office between 1968 and 1970. Returning to Germany in happier circumstances in 1970, he spent four years as Minister and Deputy Commandant in the British Military Government in Berlin.

The first of his two appointments as Ambassador was to Saigon from where he was flown out in the last helicopter to leave as the Thieu-Ky regime in South Vietnam finally collapsed before the advancing Communist forces of General Giap. His final tour as British Ambassador to Pakistan, 1975-79, was almost as dramatic, coinciding as it did with the overthrow in 1977 and subsequent execution of the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the assumption of power by the military under General Zia.

Apart from a little part-time work for the Foreign Office, Bushell retired completely on his return to this country. He travelled a great deal, especially to sites of archaeological interest around the Mediterranean where he indulged his love of classical scholarship. He played a lot of bridge and a little tennis — although the injuries suffered in his road accident inhibited his early love of outdoor sports.

Essentially a shy man with old-fashioned values, John Bushell was nonetheless a friendly diplomat with a dry wit, and got on particularly well with visiting journalists. He was at his most contented, however, among his own family. He is survived by his wife Theodora and their son, together with a stepson and stepdaughter.

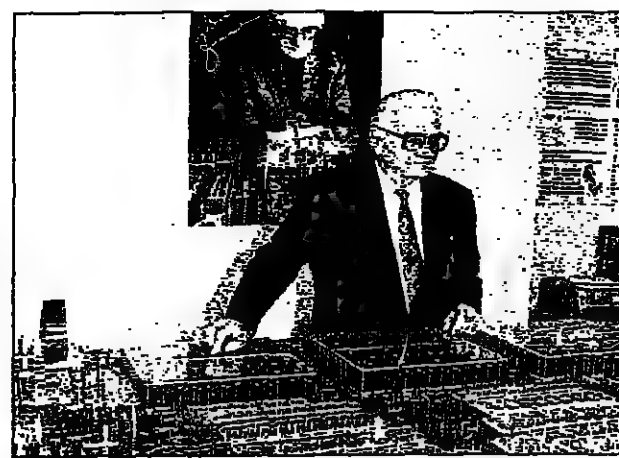
KONRAD ZUSE

Konrad Zuse, computer pioneer, died on December 18 aged 85. He was born on June 22, 1910.

KONRAD ZUSE pioneered digital computing techniques, and had the distinction of producing the world's first general purpose, programme-controlled calculator, the Z3, in 1941. What was so remarkable about this was that he did it almost alone and from scratch. At a time when digital techniques in computing were not established, Zuse reinvented a form of Boolean algebra as part of his work. Funded by friends and family, he built a prototype in his parents' living room in the late 1930s.

If there was a limitation to Zuse's achievement, it was that he did not fully embrace the speed advantages which were promised by electronics. He had a visual imagination (he was a painter and had studied architecture), and thus he preferred to work along the electro-mechanical route after others had abandoned it for pure electronics.

He did his most exciting work in Nazi Germany and was partly funded by the Hitler regime but as a scientist he claimed to be detached from politics. Computer historians never held his past against him and regarded him as one of the tribe. Nazism may even, indeed, have hampered his researches. The war had been a major stimulus to computer technology in other parts of the world, and while American and British scientists were receiving proper funding for their own computers — ENIAC and Colossus respectively — Zuse was not given the sort of money he required to develop an electronic version of his calculator. The German authorities, having been told it would take two years to build, were so convinced that they would have won the war by then that they decided such expenditure



was merely a waste of money.

Konrad Zuse was born in Berlin, and educated there at the Institute of Technology, where he read civil engineering. He had a chequered early career before coming to engineering, but he always preferred working with mechanical and electro-mechanical constructions rather than electronics, which he left to others who were better qualified.

In 1935 he joined the Henschel Aircraft Company, but the following year he began to build a calculating machine. He worked in his parents' home with his friend, an electronics expert, Helmut Schreyer. A number of prototype calculators followed over the next ten years. Z1 in 1938 (originally these were named V1, V2 etc, but were renamed when the German rockets of those names were developed). Z1 had a storage capacity of 16 words and operated, like its successors, with punch cards. It also worked on a binary system, this being during a period when most of the rest of the developing computing industry was working in the time-honoured decimal system.

It was the Z3, however, completed in 1941 and funded by the Nazi Government's Aviation Research Institute,

which could really claim to be a revolutionary computer. It was composed of a tape reader, an operator's console and two cabinets with 2,600 relays. It had a small memory, capable of storing 64 22-bit numbers, but was fast enough to multiply two rows of digits in three to five seconds.

The machine was destroyed by Allied bombing, but its successor, Z4, survived the war. This was an even more powerful binary digital computer which the authorities were keen to keep out of harm's way. When bombing intensified, Z4 was removed from Berlin, and arrived, after an eventful drive, in a battered state, at its resting place in a small village in Bavaria.

Zuse also worked on a chess-playing system. As far back as 1938, he was predicting to friends that the world chess champion would be beaten by a computer in another half-century. In 1949 Zuse turned his hand to business, building and marketing his own designs from his company in Hesse. He was not, however, a natural businessman. His company was taken over in 1956 by Siemens, and Zuse subsequently turned his attention to research.

He is survived by his wife, Gisela, and four children. Another son predeceased him.

AHMED KARADAWI

Ahmed Karadawi, refugee worker, died of lung cancer in Khartoum on November 20 aged 50. He was born in Kordofan on October 19, 1945.



SUDAN, one of Africa's largest and most impoverished countries, has since its independence in 1956, been beset by internal conflict between the Muslim north and the Christian and Animist south. The urban populations of northern Sudan, where Ahmed Abdel-Wadoud Karadawi was brought up, were swollen by displaced peoples fleeing the bloodshed and famine of southern regions.

To make matters worse, the shanty towns and encampments around Khartoum were filled to overflowing by migrants seeking to escape the persecutions of governments in neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Eritrea. Karadawi dedicated his life to the plight of these refugees, examining the structures of humanitarian assistance provided for them. He was responsible for improving the conditions of displaced peoples not only in Sudan but throughout Africa.

Graduating from Khartoum University — he later studied for a master's degree and a doctorate at the universities of Reading and Oxford — Karadawi joined the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Khartoum in 1970. He was principally concerned with the problems of the people of Eritrea, the former Italian colony which had been involved in a civil war for nearly 30 years before its independence was finally declared in 1993. Refugees from its arid plateaux and stony ravines, scourged by the MIG bombers of the Soviet-backed Ethiopian Government, fled in their

thousands across the border into Sudan.

The two decades in which Karadawi served on the UNHCR were to prove crucial ones in the development of African refugee policy. He set up meetings between international aid agencies and their beneficiaries. Previously the needs of refugees had not been taken fully into account — aid supplied in the form of maize oil or flour, for example, was of little use to people without cooking facilities. Karadawi insisted that refugees should be consulted as to their requirements.

He argued forcefully that they should not be considered merely passive recipients of aid. UN policy had tended to concentrate displaced peoples in encampments and areas where aid could be easily delivered, but Karadawi contended that this exacerbated tensions between refugees and host nations and created seeds of political ferment.

He explored ways in which refugees could be integrated within host societies so that they could contribute to local economies. His vision included such far-reaching ideas as the introduction of educational policies to teach Arabic to

Eritreans and Tigrinia to their Sudanese hosts.

Karadawi was influential in the passing of the crucial 1974 Sudanese Refugee Act — one of the most liberal in Africa, if not in the world. The Act declared that unaccompanied children, and asylum-seekers who had to wait more than three months for judgment to be passed on their cases, should automatically be granted refugee status. He protested strongly when in the early 1980s Europe and North America began introducing restrictionist asylum policies, predicting that their example would be followed by African governments. He was later proved right. Rwandan refugees are trapped on the Kenya-Tanzania border, and Tanzania has justified its actions by citing the US Government's treatment of Haitians.

Karadawi worked on an individual level, too, seeking the support of Amnesty International in order to secure the release of unjustly detained people. He never compromised his beliefs in the interests of personal security. When thousands were dying of starvation because General Nimeiry had refused to disclose the 1985 famine, Karadawi was asked by a BBC journalist whose fault it was. His answer was inimitable: "Who else? The Government."

In 1982 Karadawi co-founded and developed the Refugee Studies programme at Oxford — a multidisciplinary centre which aimed to deepen the understanding and analysis of causes of forced migration and solutions to this problem. He spent much of the Eighties there and it was his dream that centres such as this would develop all over the world.

Ahmed Karadawi is survived by his wife Selma, and their son and daughter.

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NEWS

Tory fishing rebels help defeat

The Government suffered an embarrassing blow last night as Tory MPs combined with Labour to defeat it over the European fisheries policy.

In spite of a frantic whipping exercise John Major's fragile parliamentary position was vividly exposed as MPs representing fishing communities, Euro-sceptics and most of the Opposition party lined up against him. The Government lost by two as more than a dozen Tories rebelled. Pages 1, 8

Tories try to save MP from bankruptcy

Senior Conservatives rallied round to save David Ashby from financial ruin as he faced a £500,000 bill for a failed libel action in which he was branded a lying, hypocritical homosexual. A rescue fund could prove vital, since any MP made bankrupt has to stand down. Page 1

Lottery rebuke

Peter Davis is to keep his job as regulator of the National Lottery but was rebuked by Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, for accepting free flights from a company linked to Camelot. Page 1

Holloway warning

Ministers were warned months ago by Holloway's Board of Visitors that the deterioration in conditions for the hundreds of women inmates at the jail. Page 1

New line

British Rail's 48-year monopoly on train services came to an end when three passenger franchises were sold. Page 2

Lucifer convicted

A reign of fear ended for a robber who called himself Lucifer. Keith Bramble, 36, was said to have enjoyed terrorising his victims as he raided their homes. Page 3

Libel embarrassment

Charles Lewington, the media chief at Conservative Central Office, suffered the embarrassment of being involved in a £40,000 libel award to an MP. Page 5

In the picture

Commander John Grieve, a watercolourist with a taste for Chinese philosophy and American Civil War history was named as Britain's new national anti-terrorist co-ordinator. Page 6

Two plus two makes old

Young shoppers who find themselves short-changed in the pre-Christmas rush were given a ready scapegoat yesterday: the use of calculators in primary school classrooms. A study has found that undergraduates cannot match their parents' or grandparents' generations on simple mental arithmetic. Page 4

Classic car fraud

Lord Brocket, a polo-playing friend of the Prince of Wales, is facing a prison sentence after admitting his part in a £4.5 million insurance fraud involving his collection of classic cars. Page 7

Cricket dream

Malcolm Rifkind inspired dreams of England's cricketers beating the West Indies in a Test series. Page 8

Nato in command

Nato takes command of peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina today, beginning a unique mission in the alliance's history which includes the objective of withdrawing in a year. Page 10

Assassination film

The first public screening of the only film of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination shocked Israelis with its dramatic exposure of appalling security lapses. Page 11

Schools under fire

Hospitals, schools and mosques are being targeted in a shelling campaign against the residential areas of Kabul by an Islamic movement seeking to overthrow President Rabbani. Page 12

Target Clinton

Senate Whitewater investigators are homing in on Hillary Clinton after publishing subpoenaed documents that appeared to contradict her sworn evidence given to federal regulators. Page 13



Chris Southern unloads the catch of the *Mattanja* at Padstow, Cornwall, as the fishing debate raged in Parliament. Pages 1, 8

Banking: NatWest is to sell NatWest Bancorp, its US retail banking subsidiary, to Fleet Financial, the tenth biggest bank in the US, in a \$3.56 billion deal. Page 21

Wise persons: Kenneth Clarke appointed the first women to his panel of independent economic fore-casters, ushering in the era of "wise persons". Page 21

Economy: Countries hoping to join a common currency must be ambitious in planning to cut deficits and must tackle structural rigidities in their labour markets, says the OECD think tank. Page 22

Markets: The FT-SE 100 fell 19.2 to 3576.9. Sterling's index rose from 82.5 to 82.9 after a rise from \$1.5385 to \$1.5435 and from DM2.2031 to DM2.2160. Page 24

Cricket: Angus Fraser's omission by England from the three-day match starting in Pietermaritzburg today must raise considerable doubts about his future at Test level. Page 40

Bowls: Women bowlers in Scotland struck a blow for traditional values by revoking a rule allowing them to go hatless in the national championships. Page 40

Athletics: David Powell salutes a milestone in the long-running history of one of the sport's most authoritative magazines. Page 37

Football: The Premier League appears to be set on a confrontation with European lawmakers over the edict scrapping restrictions on foreign players in domestic competitions. Page 40

Osborne's last word: To be premiered on television on Christmas Day, John Osborne's epic last play, *England, My England*, is a characteristically virulent attack on modern England, cloaked in a portrait of the Restoration composer Henry Purcell. Page 32

Sealing red: At Wembley Arena, Simply Red displayed the wide-ranging appeal that has kept them top of the pop world. Page 33

On stage: Peter Nichols's saucy *Private on Parade* has been revived at Greenwich with Tony Slattery, while Norwich's fine new Playhouse opened with Stoppard's *Jumpers*. Page 34

Juggling prodigies: More and more children want to learn the skills of the circus ring. Page 33

Party time: "The great thing about Christmas is that you can get away with anything," Jason Cowley on women behaving badly. Page 15

Naming names: You arrive and are shown to a room of strangers. And left. When were you last introduced to someone? Page 15

Sheer fun: Iain R. Webb on the endless variations on the see-through theme — from the exotic and explicit to the discreet and charming. Page 14

Cutting prices: Housing market analysts were wide of the mark with their predictions about house prices for 1995. So whom should we believe for next year? Page 30

Less than five years ago as Communist Party leaders fled their Moscow offices, frantically destroying files as they went, the very survival of the party seemed in doubt. Sadly, Sunday's parliamentary election erased that doubt. — *New York Times*.

These Communists may not be the Bolsheviks of old but they are authoritarians. If the people feel serious enough to give them control, there's no certainty that they'll ever give control back. — *USA Today*

Mary Lascelles, literary critic, teacher and poet; Konrad Zuse, computer pioneer; John Bushell, former Ambassador to Vietnam and to Pakistan; Ahmed Karadawi, refugee worker. Page 19

Brixton riots: threat to the BBC World Service; fashions in funerals: drink guidelines. Page 17

Preview: Three single men try to be lonely hearts no longer. *Man Seeks Woman* (BBC2, 9pm) **Review:** Lynne Truss wonders if *East-Enders* is going mad. Page 39

Bottomley and Davis

The head of Ofstod should display the iron judgment that working in such an area demands. In both his actions and responses Mr Davis failed in this regard and should have been replaced. Page 17

Kabul crucible

Today the Red Cross launches its Christmas appeal for the victims of Afghanistan's forgotten war: it is a call to which the world should respond generously. Page 17

Glorious mud

May the cricketers enjoy uninterrupted play over Christmas. But may there also be enough Kruger mist to keep the spinners and the hippos happy. Page 17

JOHN REDWOOD

Should Europe decide on a continental system of protection, there would be dangers for world trade and employment. Page 16

TIM CONGDON

Largely as a result of the Tories' struggle to curb the public sector, the ratio of government expenditure to national output is almost 10 per cent lower in Britain than in Germany and almost 15 per cent lower than in France. Page 16

ALAN COREN

Mrs Coren came through the front door, lugging shopping bags. "Why has the fairy got only one leg?" she inquired. Page 16

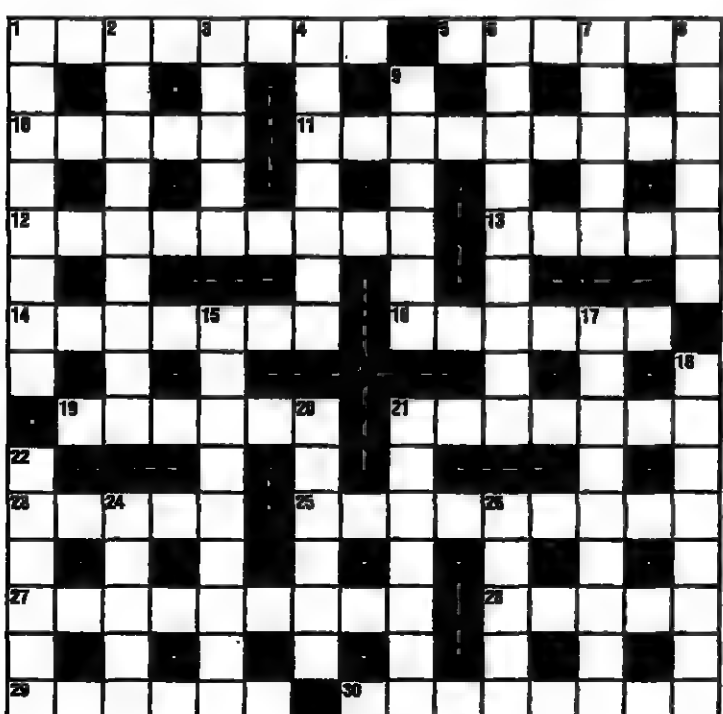
PETER RIDDELL

John Major has been bold, notably in forcing the leadership issue six months ago. My money is still on 1997, and May 1, but Mr Major will still have plenty of earlier dates pencilled into his diary. Page 8

Mary Lascelles, literary critic, teacher and poet; Konrad Zuse, computer pioneer; John Bushell, former Ambassador to Vietnam and to Pakistan; Ahmed Karadawi, refugee worker. Page 19

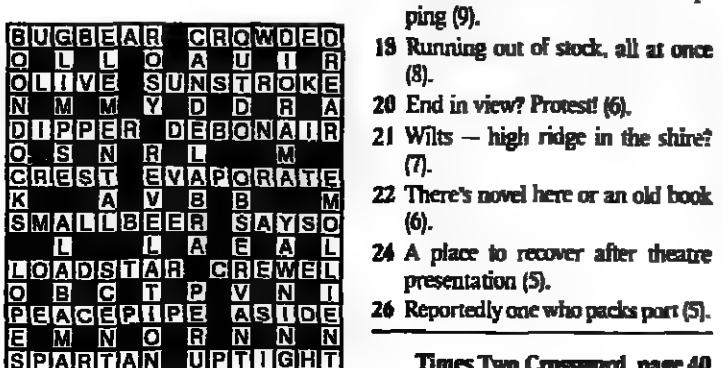
Brixton riots: threat to the BBC World Service; fashions in funerals: drink guidelines. Page 17

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,043



- ACROSS**
- Smelling-salts considered harmful to smokers (4,4).
 - Ball dispersed moths around flat (6).
 - Marks produced during delivery from China, evidently (5).
 - Cast off here? (5-4).
 - Heavenly time for some people (9).
 - Sweet nonsense (5).
 - Criterion, possibly, as the rate gets adjusted (7).
 - Injury from long row on the way back (6).
 - North American reform is OK with me (6).
 - Dürer's work reduced to ash, say? (7).
 - Quarter horse in poor shape in rude hut (5).
 - High winds in Blackburn (3,6).
 - Try getting facial hair cut? It's agony! (9).
- DOWN**
- Women's ultimate therapy, possibly? (3-5).
 - Celebrity in sergeants' mess (9).
 - One who breaks his neck, right inside bank (5).
 - Jazz, fun for students before term (7).
 - Promises of party in show-rings? (9).
 - Like Fabergé piece, a ring with no diamonds, say (5).
 - Tap and plug away (6).
 - Happened to live on mountain in Cumbria (6).
 - Tinker worked in attempt to produce gawgaws (9).
 - Band-box in odd Scottish wrapping (9).
 - Running out of stock, all at once (8).
 - Wits — high ridge in the shire? (7).
 - There's novel here or an old book (6).
 - A place to recover after theatre presentation (5).
 - Reportedly one who packs pots (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,042



THE TIMES WEATHERCAST

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Region	Forecast
Greater London	701
Kent/Surrey/Sussex	702
Devon/Herts & IOW	703
West of Cornwall	704
Wilt, Gloucestershire	705
Bedfordshire	706
Northants & Essex	707
Northants & Essex	708
West Midlands	709
West Midlands	710
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West Midlands	727

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London & SE	732
London & SE	733
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London & SE	735
London & SE	736
London & SE	737
London & SE	738
London & SE	739
London & SE	740
London & SE	741
London & SE	742
London & SE	743
London & SE	744
London & SE	745
London & SE	746
London & SE	747
London & SE	748
London & SE	749
London & SE	750

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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Porton, 13C (55F); lowest day temp: Llandudno, -1C (30F); highest rainfall: Plymouth, 1.30in; highest rainfall: Trier, 1.00in; 4.5in.

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CITIZEN TIME WELL SPENT

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will start cloudy with outbreaks of rain and sleet over the southern half turning to snow over hills. This will gradually edge southwards during the day but the rain will linger in the southwest. More northern areas should brighten up through the day, although North Sea coasts may see some wintry showers.

South and west Scotland together with Northern Ireland should be mostly dry and bright. North and east Scotland will see some brightness but also snow showers, heavy at times. Wind northwest becoming northerly moderate or fresh. Max 2C (36F).

London, SE, East of England, E Anglia, Midlands: cloudy with outbreaks of rain or sleet, and snow over hills, this clearing southwards during the day. Wind northeast moderate. Max 5C (41F).

NE, E England: cloudy start but becoming brighter during the day. Risk of wintry showers along coasts. Wind north to northeast moderate. Max 3C (37F).

Channel Is, SW England, S Wales: cloudy with outbreaks of rain or drizzle. Wind northwest gentle, becoming moderate or fresh. Max 7C (45F).

N Wales, NW, Cent N England, Lakes, Isle of Man: cloudy start but brightening up and staying mostly dry. Wind northeast moderate or fresh. Max 4C (39F).

Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: bright spells but also snow showers, heavy at times. Wind northwest becoming northerly moderate or fresh. Max 2C (36F).

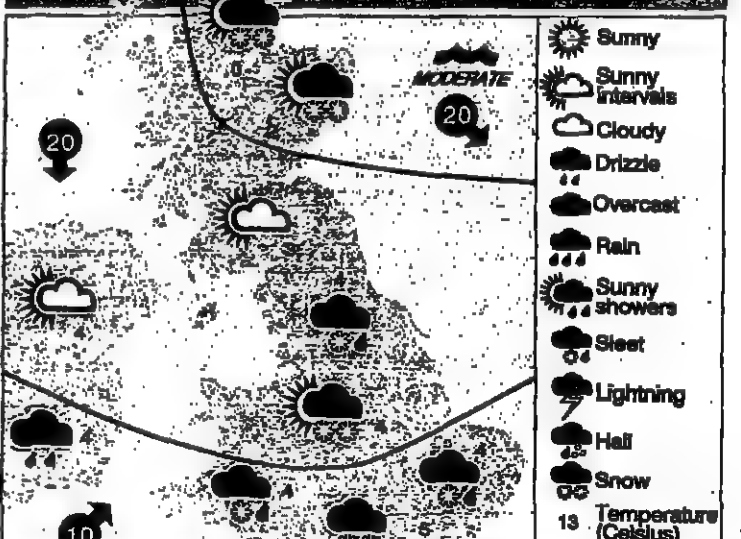
SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland: mostly dry and bright. Wind northeast becoming east fresh, strong. Max 4C (39F).

Outlook for tomorrow and Friday: bright in the north with snow showers in the east. There will be rain and sleet further south.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Station	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max
Aberdeen	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1

CHANGES TO THE CHART BELOW FROM NOON: LOW F WILL DRIFT SOUTHWESTWARDS AND RISE. LOW V WILL BE SLOW-MOVING AND RISE. HIGH G WILL EDGE EASTWARDS WITH LITTLE CHANGE IN PRESSURE.



TODAY

Station	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max
Aberdeen	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1

TODAY

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Aberdeen	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1

TODAY

Station	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max
Aberdeen	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1

TODAY

Station	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Rain	Max
Aberdeen	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
London	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Manchester	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Cardiff	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Belfast	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Edinburgh	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1
Glasgow	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.1

TODAY

Aberdeen	11:39	4.28	-	-	Lain	0:17	5.30	0:46	6.40
Winnmouth	5:08	12.42	5.36	12.84	Liverpool	9:18	9.15	8:43	9.29
Belfast	9:03	3.51	9.25	3.47	Lowestoft	7:21	2.51	8:03	2.51
Cardiff	6:06	10.97	5.29	11.18	Margate	10:09	4.57	10:41	4.51
Devonport	3:47	5.13	4.11	5.21	Millford Haven	4:14	6.54	4:38	6.74
Dover	8:54	6.48	10.21	8.47	Newquay	3:11	6.21	3:35	6.45
Fulham	9:44	4.01	10.09	4.13	Oban	4:02	3:73	4:15	3.90
Glasgow	3:09	4.01	8.28	4.13	Penzance	2:43	5.17	3:08	5.26

ARTS 32-34

Simply Red are simply marvellous at Wembley

MEDIA 28

How UK News was left high and dry

SPORT 35-40

Women bowlers change heart over headwear

WILL HOUSE PRICES RISE NEXT YEAR?
Homes 30

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 20 1995

Shares halted in troubled mining company

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

THE future of Coal Investments, the mining company, hung in the balance yesterday after its shares were suspended as directors spent the day locked in talks with financial advisers.

The company said that it was delaying its interim results and had asked for the suspension "pending clarification of its financial position".

Trading in the shares was halted after planning permission for a coalface for which the company had high production hopes was refused.

The company, formed from the remainder of Britain's mines after British Coal sold the more lucrative collieries, had already made plans to launch a rescue rights issue to shore up its balance sheet with about £20 million.

Coal Investments interim results, which had been scheduled for publication tomorrow, were expected to reveal losses of about £11 million, with the bulk coming from lost production. The company has had its financial position under review since the start of this month.

Speculation was mounting yesterday that the company's bankers could press for the departure of Malcolm Edwards, the founder and executive chairman, as City concern increases.

One mining analyst said that there was a feeling that the company should have kept the Stock Exchange more in touch with events. The City has been looking to the recruitment of outside industrialists to the group and for Mr Edwards to take more of a back seat.

Since the company was founded in 1993 by Mr Edwards, who was formerly commercial director at British Coal, it has raised £30 million from investors. Although it has spent heavily on its six collieries, some industry watchers believe the patience of the company's bankers is wearing thin.

Charles Kernot, mining analyst at Paribas, said: "There would be no shortage of buyers for the mines. The question mark hangs over the commitment of the banks to the company."

Coal Investments intends to appeal against the decision to refuse planning permission, but time may run out for the company before a hearing.

Pennington, page 23



Edwards: firm's founder



Kate Barker caused a temporary fall in sterling when she suggested that a further 3 per cent depreciation in the pound would be useful to exporters

NatWest sells Bancorp in \$3.56bn US deal

By PATRICIA TEHAN AND RICHARD THOMSON

NATIONAL Westminster Bank is to sell NatWest Bancorp, its American retail banking subsidiary, to Fleet Financial, the tenth biggest bank in the US, in a \$3.56 billion deal that has taken months to hammer out.

NatWest will receive just \$3.16 billion for the business as it is buying back assets worth \$400 million. The price, of which only \$2.6 billion is payable immediately, is far lower than the \$4 billion to \$5 billion NatWest had originally hoped for. Analysts said the price was "disappointing but acceptable". NatWest shares closed 19½p higher last night at 64½p.

The cash payment of \$2.6 billion could be reduced to \$2.1 billion with the rest paid in

stock if Fleet opts to finance the deal with the issue of up to \$175 million of common stock and up to \$300 million of preferred stock to NatWest.

Additional payments of a total of up to \$560 million will be payable over the next eight years, dependent on Bancorp's future earnings. Derek Wanless, NatWest chief executive, said he expected the total deferred consideration would be satisfied within four years.

The \$400 million assets excluded from the sale include a non-performing loan portfolio of \$315 million net of provisions and an \$85 million building in Manhattan occupied by NatWest Markets.

Lord Alexander, the chairman, said the bank was reviewing ways in which the

proceeds from the sale can be utilised, "including returning capital to shareholders". One way could be a share buyback. In April the bank received shareholder permission to repurchase up to 100 million ordinary shares.

Mr Wanless said other options available to the bank include in-fill acquisitions.

As a result of the structure of the sale with the deferral of some of the payment, and to conform with UK accounting law, NatWest will make an accounting loss of about £600 million on the sale next year. That will be reduced over time as the bank receives proceeds from the earnout.

NatWest was forced to reveal its plans to sell Bancorp in September after news

leaked. The decision followed widespread consolidation in the US banking sector. Lord Alexander said yesterday: "With the rapid pace of consolidation in the US banking market, Bancorp could not maintain its competitive position long term without further substantial investment." NatWest did not believe that such investment would yield acceptable returns, he added.

Bancorp has \$32 billion in assets and 310 branches in New York and New Jersey. Fleet is the tenth largest bank after its merger with Shawmut National Corporation this month. It has a market capitalisation of \$9.73 billion. The acquisition will take it to seventh place. Bancorp will be merged with Fleet's New

York-based banking business. The combined operation will trade as Fleet NY.

John Tugwell, chairman and chief executive of Bancorp, will become president and chief executive of Fleet NY. NatWest will appoint two additional directors to the board of the merged bank. Mr Wanless said this was because the bank had "an interest in the way the bank will be managed because of the earnout".

Fleet said the acquisition would be financed primarily through internal funding sources. It expects to issue \$600 million of preferred stock and \$400 million of debt securities.

Pennington, page 23

Women join panel of the wise men

By JANET DUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday appointed the first women to his panel of independent economic forecasters, ending the sobriquet "wise men" and ushering in the era of "wise persons".

The three appointments place greater emphasis on the regional economies and industry, and include a strong strain of Keynesian economics. Notably, the new panellists believe that the Chancellor's forecast of 3 per cent growth next year is over-optimistic. They join the three men left from the original panel of seven set up by Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor, to bolster policy credibility after sterling left the exchange-rate mechanism.

Kate Barker, formerly head of economics at Ford of Europe and now chief economic adviser at the Confederation of British Industry, marked her appointment by causing a temporary fall in sterling when she suggested in an interview that a further 3 per cent depreciation in the pound would be useful for exporters.

The second woman is Bridget Rosewell, joint managing director of Business Strategies, the regional economic consultancy that she set up after leaving her post as deputy director of economics at the CBI. Ms Rosewell described herself as a Keynesian.

The other vacant place on the panel goes to Martin Weale, the new head of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Mr Weale, a reader-elect in economics at Cambridge University, had worked variously at the Bank of England, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve bank and the National Statistical Office of Malawi.

The three new members join Gavin Davies, of Goldman Sachs, Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research, and Patrick Minford of Liverpool University on the panel.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3576.9	(-19.2)
Yield	3.58%	
FT-SE All share	1733.78	(-5.04)
Nikkei	19140.45	(-170.56)
New York		
Dow Jones	9077.74	(+2.63)*
S&P Composite	626.24	(-6.03)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	8 1/4%	(57.4)
Long Bond	108 1/4	(109.4)
Yield	6.15%	(6.17%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	8 1/4%	(8.76)
Life long get		
Future (Dec)	110 1/4	(110.4)

STERLING

New York		
\$	1.5428*	(1.5420)
London		
\$	1.5428	(1.5398)
DM	2.2176	(2.2028)
FF	7.6285	(7.5910)
Sfr	1.7732	(1.7673)
Yen	187.09	(188.56)
£ Index	82.9	(82.5)

DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.4384*	(1.4282)
FF	4.9508*	(4.9224)
Sfr	1.1229*	(1.1455)
Yen	101.64*	(101.53)
£ Index	84.0	(83.9)

Tokyo close Yen 101.86

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar) \$17.40 (\$17.50)

GOLD

London close \$388.00 (\$387.28)

* denotes midday trading price

Profit warnings

Coats Vytella and Courtaulds Textiles, two of Britain's largest clothing manufacturers, yesterday revealed the extent of the damage wreaked by the unusually mild autumn weather by issuing surprise profit warnings to their shareholders.

Page 23, Tempos 24

OECD warning

European countries hoping to join a common currency must be ambitious in planning to cut budget deficits and must tackle structural rigidities in their labour markets before they lose their independence over interest rate policy, the OECD said yesterday.

Page 22

White Hart hotel backer pulls out

By ERIC REGULY

THE sale of White Hart, the mid-market hotels chain owned by Forte, all but collapsed yesterday after Apax Partners, a venture capital group in London, decided to withdraw the financing it had lined up for the proposed purchaser.

Apax, which is funded largely by American institutions, had been negotiating with Oriel Leisure, a small hotels management company, to buy 60 of the 72 White Hart hotels for about £120 million. Apax's contribution towards the purchase price was to be about £40 million.

Apax had concerns about the value of the hotels, whose annual profits are about £12 million, and tried to negotiate a discount of 20 per cent or so last week. The lower offer was rejected by Forte. A Forte spokesman said: "We intend to sell these businesses at a proper price, but we're in no hurry."

John Moulton, Apax's direc-

tor, would not comment about the valuation discrepancy. He said: "We would have been happy to complete the transaction."

Forte, which is under takeover threat from Granada, considers White Hart a non-core asset and had hoped to sell the chain quickly.

Granada was pleased that the sale has hit a snag because it would keep White Hart if its takeover succeeds. Gerry Robinson, Granada's chief executive, said: "We believe it's better to keep and develop a business like White Hart. It can only benefit shareholders in the long term."

Forte said that it continues to talk to Oriel's managers, but said they were no longer considered the lead candidates to purchase White Hart. Forte is talking to other potential purchasers. It would not identify them and said no sale should be expected before the end of the year.

Fed rate cut by quarter of a point

AMERICA'S Federal Reserve last night cut the Fed funds rate by 0.25 per cent of a percentage point in what officials described as a cautious move, designed to give the economy a helping hand in the New Year.

The cut to 5.5 per cent in the rate that commercial banks charge each other for overnight loans is the second this year.

Officials at the Federal Open Markets Committee meeting last night, however, left unchanged the discount rate, the amount that the Fed charges banks for money.

The cut followed a less turbulent day on world markets. Just after the rate cut was announced the Dow Jones industrial average was down 20 points. In London, the FT-SE 100 index closed down 19.2 points at 3,576.9.

The Fed decision came ahead of a crucial meeting on America's budget impasse which began at 8pm London time.

BTR sells Dunlop for £300 million

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

DUNLOP SLAZINGER, the sports goods manufacturer, changed hands for £300 million yesterday as the company's owner, BTR, the industrial conglomerate, continued its disposal strategy.

Dunlop has been bought by CINVEN, the venture capital company, which until a management buyout in October was part of British Coal. CINVEN also bought Compass's healthcare division for £180 million earlier this month.

The Dunlop sale follows the disposal last month of Ticon, the aggregates business, for £330 million and had been expected for some time. BTR's share price closed unchanged at 316p.

BTR has been using the money from disposals to fund the £2 billion purchase of the minority stake in Nylex, its Australian subsidiary. The City is anticipating further sales, with the most likely considered to be BTR's Taiwanese chemicals division.

Dunlop is best known for its golf and tennis products and employs 3,000 people worldwide. Its brands include Slazinger, Maadli and Carlton. Last year, Dunlop had a turnover of £275 million.

The company was founded in Belfast in 1889 by John Boyd Dunlop, inventor of the pneumatic tyre, while Slazinger started out as a modest family sports business established by Czech immigrants in Manchester in the 1920s.

The two companies merged in the 1960s and were taken over by BTR after a tough £100 million bid battle in 1985.

Dunlop had already disposed of its core tyre-making operations to Sumitomo of Japan in the early 1980s but BTR continued the process of disposing of Dunlop's motor interests, selling off the famous Fort Dunlop site, Birmingham, in 1989 and a majority stake in the automotive components division to Siemens, of Germany, in 1991.

Pledge to scrap nuclear power subsidy overturned

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

FRESH controversy hit the soon-to-be privatised nuclear industry after the electricity regulator reinforced a levy on prices designed to subsidise nuclear power in an announcement that flew in the face of a pledge made by Michael Heseltine to abandon the charge and cut customer bills by £20 a year.

The Labour Party called for an immediate inquiry into why the levy, which is likely to cost customers up to £500 million, is to continue. Nigel Griffiths, the party's spokesman on consumer affairs, declared the promise made by Mr Heseltine in May, when the Deputy

Prime Minister revealed plans for the privatisation of the nuclear plants, "an extravagance the Government clearly can't afford to pay for".

The statement by Stephen Littlechild, the regulator, that the fossil fuel levy, paid on electricity bills to support nuclear power, would remain at 10 per cent also provoked a storm in the industry. The Chemical Industries Association said it was deeply disappointed that the nuclear element of the fossil fuel levy — which makes up the bulk of the charge — was to remain after the Government had indicated that it would be abolished on privatisation. Professor Littlechild said that a

reduced rate would apply after the sell-off, which is expected in the spring or summer of next year, in a statement that contradicts Mr Heseltine's pledge of abolition.

The regulator said that the levy would fall to a rate to fund continuing obligations for renewable fuels and to recover outstanding arrears between Nuclear Electric and the Non-Fossil Purchasing Agency.

In his statement to the Commons in May, Mr Heseltine said that electricity bills should fall by about 8 per cent by autumn 1996. Tim Eggar, the Industry Minister, yesterday said that the fall was now more likely to be 6 per cent.

But he insisted that customers would not lose out and said that the returns to customers from the National Grid flotation over the £50 set by Professor Littlechild would take the average reduction in bills to more than the £20 pledged by Mr Heseltine.

Money raised from the fossil fuel levy will go to meet decommissioning costs on Magnox reactors which are staying in the public sector. Those costs have been put at £8.5 billion, while the Government revealed in May that it had raised £5.9 billion to fund it.

BNFL plant, page 22
National Power buyback, page 23

Littlechild: provoked storm

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Solicitors convicted in £8m fraud case

By Robert Miller

TWO men, including the senior partner of one of the largest firms of solicitors in Hastings, East Sussex, have been convicted for their part in defrauding about £8 million from more than 1,000 beneficiaries, and will appear at Maidstone Crown court for sentencing today.

Both men can expect to receive prison terms for what has been described by the Serious Fraud Office, which brought the case, as a "cynical and particularly unpleasant crime against innocent people".

Graham Maurice Durnford Ford, 52, a senior partner of Durnford Ford, which collapsed in May 1992, pleaded guilty to 10 specimen counts of

theft of clients' money, involving £5 million in October.

Sentencing on Ford was delayed while his co-accused William Digby Bew, 33, stood trial on four charges of furnishing false information, on which he was found guilty yesterday.

The case was brought by the Serious Fraud Office in conjunction with Sussex police.

Ford, the driving force behind Durnford Ford, lived a lavish life-style funded by proceeds stolen from the estates of deceased clients.

Serious Fraud Office investigators found that between 1988 and 1992 Ford spent more than £870,000. This included £250,000 on his "splendid" house in Battle, Sussex, for the

installation of a swimming pool and other improvements. The house was transferred to his wife's name prior to the collapse of the legal firm and Ford being struck off the roll of solicitors by the Law Society, the profession's governing body. The Solicitors Compensation Fund has paid out around £8 million to former clients of Durnford Ford.

The Serious Fraud Office said that Ford also transferred £250,000 to his joint bank account with his wife, took an average of £200,000 a year from the business, compared with between £30,000 and £40,000 for his partners, and a further £44,000 placed in Mrs Ford's personal account.

Ford also pre-paid £25,000 to

Benedict School, whose former pupils include the Princess Royal, for his daughter's fees. He also spent £63,000 on his American Express card, a further £34,000 on Barclaycard and £31,000 in cash.

Ford worked his scam by billing the deceased client's estate on an interim and final basis. Ford, however, never actually sent out the interim bills, although he took the money.

In one example a gross estate valued at £32,000 was charged £11,000 which is at least £9,000 above the average bill that might have been levied by an honest practitioner.

Bew, who was in charge of the Probate department, was involved in the final billing stage, knowing that

clients had been charged an interim bill but without including this information on the final bill.

Andrew Jackson, the senior Serious Fraud Office lawyer who led the successful prosecution, said: "Ford is responsible for a particularly cynical and unpleasant crime. He exploited people who were at their most vulnerable and also devastated the lives of wholly innocent people he worked with."

The former partners in Durnford Ford have also lost out. They all face equity partner liability bills, have lost their homes and been forced to move out of the area even though they were unaware of Ford's fraudulent activities. The firm's employees were also losers.

EU nations must tackle deficits says OECD

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

EUROPEAN countries hoping to join a common currency must be ambitious in planning to cut budget deficits and must tackle structural rigidities in their labour markets before they lose their independence over interest rate policy, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned yesterday.

The OECD, in its semi-annual World Economic Outlook, said that, on policies announced, only four countries — Germany, France, Britain and Luxembourg — would meet the Maastricht Treaty's debt-to-gross domestic product ratios. It said "the fiscal retrenchment required in some countries over the next two years will be substantial" to cut deficits towards the Maastricht limit of 3 per cent of GDP.

The OECD emphasised the importance of continued efforts to cut budget deficits, not just because of the Maastricht timetable, but also because these would allow lower interest rates. These, it argued, are necessary to create the high levels of consumer and business confidence which would create more employment.

Once a single currency is in place, it said the consequences

of delay in making structural reforms to deal with high unemployment would become increasingly visible. It said even on the most optimistic assumptions, overall unemployment in the European Union would remain high.

The OECD report highlighted a slowdown in the pace of economic expansion in the industrialised countries which it represents, compared with both last year and its own projections in June this year. However, it said inflation remained low. Interest rates had fallen in most countries and exchange rates were closer in line with economic fundamentals.

It predicted that total OECD growth would pick up to 2.6 per cent in 1996 from 2.4 per cent this year. But industrialised countries in Europe should see growth slowing from a pace of 2.9 per cent this year to 2.6 per cent in 1996.

The OECD expressed particular concern about Japan and the fragility of its financial system. It predicted that the Japanese economy would grow by 0.3 per cent this year, rising to 2 per cent in 1996. It said that the fiscal package announced by Tokyo in September should help to promote a recovery in domestic demand, but should the economy be weaker than it projects, priority should be given to the use of the remaining, although small, room for further monetary easing.

It urged Japan to tackle bad and non-performing loans in its financial sector as soon as possible. The OECD's forecast for Britain was completed on November 10, before the Budget and the subsequent 4-point base rate cut. Without this information, it predicted that the economy would grow by 2.4 per cent, below the 3 per cent Budget forecast.

Coal funds group sold to Friends Provident

By Robert Miller

FRIENDS PROVIDENT, the British fund management group, has won its bid to buy CINMAN, the company that looks after the £17 billion British Coal Pension Schemes.

British Coal declined to disclose the price that Friends Provident will pay and said that it expected definitive agreements to be signed in January. It is understood, however, that Friends Provident, which will double its £15 billion funds under management, will pay about £7.6 million now and a further £24 million or so after two years, subject to performance.

This was similar to the deal signed with Jupiter Tyndall last year for Queen Anne's Gate Asset Management, the company set up in 1989 to manage some £2 billion from the privatised water companies' pension funds. Friends Provident, which will become the UK's 10th largest fund manager, beat off a final rival bid by Sal Oppenheim, a German company. Michael Doerr, group chief executive of Friends Provident, said: "We are looking forward to working closely with the Trustees of the Coal Schemes and to the continued provision of a high quality fund management service for the long term."

The British Coal deal, part of a process to sell all its business operations, will transfer the management of the British Coal Staff scheme and the Mineworkers Pension scheme, on which a total of 550,000 miners and staff have a claim. In October, CINMAN was sold to management in a deal believed to be worth less than £5 million.

PolyGram issues profit warning

By Martin Barlow

POLYGRAM, the music and entertainment group, struck a sour note with investors yesterday, with a profit warning that wiped almost 11 per cent from the value of its shares.

The company, whose majority shareholder is Philips, the Dutch electronics group, has achieved a compound annual growth rate of 20 per cent in net income since 1990. So investors were shocked by the disclosure that net profits for 1995 would be, at best, flat, particularly after the company returned a 15 per cent rise in sales in profits in the first half of the year.

Alain Levy, PolyGram's president and chief executive officer, said: "Any creative company has seasonal setbacks. We have had a cold spell in the second half of 1995."

Industry observers were less sanguine. "They've always published double digit growth... Something must have gone terribly wrong," said Ab Barnevelt, an analyst at CLN & Van Eggen, the Dutch broker.

The company, whose shares were floated in London in October 1989, blamed a below-par pop release schedule in the second half, delays in the delivery of key albums, the lack of a big hit from the film division and a strong appreciation of the guild. During the year, the currency rose 9 per cent against the dollar, yen and sterling.

This is all a far cry from Mr



Jack Leonard, chairman, left, and Claes Hultman will concentrate on new products

Eurotherm drives up 31%

By Alasdair Murray

EUROTHERM, the specialist electronics company, unveiled sparkling full-year figures yesterday. Profits soared 31 per cent to £34 million, boosted by a particularly strong performance in the drives and gauging division.

In an upbeat statement, the company promised further growth next year. Claes Hultman, chief executive, said: "Eurotherm is on track and delivering growth. Our strategy is based on organic growth and we have made massive improvements over the past five years." The company said it had ruled out acquisitions but that it was rare to find

complementary businesses that would enhance shareholder value; instead it would continue to concentrate on developing new products.

Eurotherm added it had benefited this year from recovery in Europe and a resumption in capital investment in the paper and process industries which it supplies with temperature control equipment and recording instruments. Turnover increased 16 per cent to £194.5 million, while pre-tax margins rose from 15.5 to 17.5 per cent. The dividend was increased from 5.5p to 7.5p and will be paid on 12 April 1996.

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Engineers reveal slowing growth and orders

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

ENGINEERING leaders yesterday claimed that rising investment in the industry suggests further growth in output in the new year. But the latest business trends survey from the EEF engineering employers showed growth and orders have slowed over the past six months, and that export orders are falling back.

Though EEF leaders put a positive gloss on their figures, the more mixed pattern overall is in line with the findings of other large-scale business surveys, which are beginning to show a decline — especially in domestic orders.

In its survey, taken before last week's interest rate cut, a sample of more than 1,700 engineering firms showed capital investment continuing to rise strongly. Thirty-two per cent of those surveyed reported an increase in capital expenditure plans, and only 9 per cent recorded a fall.

Graham Mackenzie, EEF director-general, said: "The continuing rise in investment by engineering companies is a very encouraging sign of confidence for 1996. We expect further real growth in engineering output during 1996."

"Growth in orders has slowed during the last two quarters of 1995, but output shows no sign of falling."

Output and new orders continued to grow during the last three months of 1995 at a similar rate to the previous quarter. A balance of 22 per cent of firms reported a rise in output, while a balance of 12 per cent said there had been an increase in new orders. While new UK orders continue to increase, growth is slow. Thirty-four per cent of firms said there was a rise, and 30 per cent a fall.

While export orders are continuing to grow quicker than domestic orders, growth in exports is also slowing. The balance of 9 per cent of firms seeing export orders increasing will come as a further sign of a slowdown in overall export growth — which has been vital to the recovery.

Bruton flies in to aid steel deal

By Christine Buckley

JOHN BRUTON, the Irish Prime Minister, flew into London last night for an emergency meeting with the head of the company that wants to buy Irish Steel. His hastily arranged meeting came as lobbying stepped up ahead of today's EU industry council meeting to persuade Britain to sanction a rescue plan for the Irish company.

Tensions are growing between London and Dublin over Britain's vetoing of government aid for Irish Steel which would ensure increased production and a smooth sale to ISPAT, the Indian corporation that wants to buy the company. State aid requires the backing of all EU members of the industry council but Britain is standing alone in refusing to back the award. Tim Eggar, the Industry Minister, said the rescue package for Irish Steel would endanger up to 1,000 jobs in Britain. On Monday a delegation of Irish politicians returned to Dublin, having failed to persuade Mr Eggar to change his mind.

Meanwhile exhaustive talks are continuing between London and Dublin in an effort to see if the two can strike a deal on restricting export markets and product ranges.

Japan plans to bail out mortgage companies

By Our City Staff

IN A first step towards confronting Japan's bad debt hangover from the 1980s, the Government yesterday announced a plan to spend taxpayers' money to help to bail out troubled mortgage companies.

Government officials are rushing to get the appropriations written into draft budget legislation that should be submitted to the various ministries today.

Masayoshi Takemura, the Finance Minister, defended the rescue plan, which is sure to be opposed because 680 billion yen (£4.1 billion) will have to come from the public coffers.

"The financial system is an artery of the Japanese economy, but that area is saddled with massive problem loans and suffering from cancer," Mr Takemura said. "A drastic surgical operation is needed to remove the tumor."

The seven housing loan corporations, or *jusen*, are holding about 7.5 trillion yen (7,500 billion yen) worth of problem debt. The plan was approved in a special Cabinet meeting yesterday.

A recession and relatively low property prices have dogged Japan for nearly four years, riddling Japanese lending institutions with debts. The resolution of the mortgage company crisis is sure to be just a prelude to the eventual



Takemura defended plan

tackling of massive bank debts.

Public opposition to using government money in the bailout remains strong. Commentators attacked the plan, and it could undermine the coalition government of the Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama.

Several leading banks funded housing lenders in the late 1980s, when real estate prices were soaring and the Finance Ministry wanted to encourage private citizens to invest in homes. The banks and other financial organisations connected with wealthy agricultural co-operatives together made trillions of yen in ill-fated loans to the housing lenders. When the value of the

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

BNFL to build £360m plant at Sellafield

BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS, the government-owned company that supplies fuel to nuclear plants and treats waste from the industry, is to build a £360 million plant that it says will create 1,000 jobs in construction and operation. The plant at the Sellafield site in Cumbria will use what the company claims is new technology to treat intermediate level radioactive waste and is scheduled to be completed in 2002. It will convert the waste, which currently has to be stored as a liquid, into dry material which can be compressed and stored in drums using a fraction of the space that is required at present.

The development has been several years in the designing and, once in operation, BNFL plans to export the technique. Most of the waste processed at the plant will come from the Sellafield nuclear reactors, although some will be sent from elsewhere. The large investment comes just a week after British Energy, the holding company for the soon-to-be privatised Nuclear Electric and Scottish Nuclear, abandoned immediate plans to build new reactors. BNFL said that the plant should result in lifetime savings of about £500 million on the costs of intermediate level waste management.

Howden edges ahead

HOWDEN GROUP, the tunnelling, process equipment and aerospace equipment company, reported a 26 per cent rise in order intake to £243 million in the first half. A strong performance in the Pacific Basin, South Africa and parts of Europe more than offsetting difficult trading in other regions, particularly North America. But profits before tax rose just £400,000 to £10.98 million in the six months to October 31. The interim dividend is increased to 0.95p a share from 0.89p, due on May 1. The shares were unchanged at 67p.

AEG disposals cost jobs

AEG, the German rail and engineering group, said at least 1,700 jobs would be lost after the sale of its energy and industrial automation units to GEC Alsthom and Cegelec, of France, respectively. AEG said GEC Alsthom would take over a large part of its power business and that its industrial automation business would be grouped in a holding company, in which Cegelec would have a 51 per cent stake and AEG 49 per cent. AEG said more jobs would probably go after the sale of smaller units to CWB Capital Partners.

BTG agrees placing

BTG, which specialises in developing and licensing patents for new technologies, has agreed to a placing in response to strong demand in the market since its June flotation at 225p a share. Originally, BTG's venture capital and university investors had agreed not to sell their interest for a year but this was partly relaxed in October and now, 556,500 of the original investors' shares, or 3.2 per cent of BTG's share capital, have been placed by Kleinwort Benson with institutional investors, at £10.50 a share. The shares fell 30p to £10.35.

Thames Water project

THAMES WATER has finalised the £558 million water supply project for the Turkish city of Izmir after five years of study and negotiation. The company is the single largest investor with 35 per cent of the equity. About 85 per cent of the project is covered by loans supported by the Commercial and Export Credit Agency, with the remaining 15 per cent being subscribed by the project sponsors. Construction is expected to begin in January, when the loan agreements become effective.

Persona in £20m deal

PERSONA GROUP, a UK distributor of networking and communications products for personal computers, is acquiring Financiere Top Log, a distributor of Unix, network and communications products for £19.9 million. The deal will be funded through a 17-for-20 rights issue of new shares at 225p each, raising about £21.1 million. Top Log operates in France, Britain, Spain, Germany and Belgium. In the year to September 30, the company's turnover was £63.5 million and profits were £2.2 million before tax. Persona shares fell 10p to 271p.

Trinity expands

TRINITY HOLDINGS, the specialist vehicles company that owns the Dennis brand, is to acquire the aircraft and handling division of ML Holdings for £14.25 million. The division, which comprises ML Douglas Holdings and Schopf Maschinenbau, achieved turnover of £28.2 million and operating profits of £800,000, excluding group charges, in the year ended March 31. Net assets were £9.3 million. Trinity is funding the acquisition through a placing of 4.3 million new shares at 329p each. ML will use the funds to repay borrowings.

Loan portfolio changes hands

ANGLO IRISH BANK has bought a £69 million corporate loan portfolio from Allied Dunbar Assurance (Patricia Tehan writes).

The sale is part of Allied Dunbar's strategy of moving out of non-core businesses.

Peter Killen, director of risk assets at Anglo Irish, said the loans were all based in the UK and of excellent quality. The average size of loan in the portfolio is £450,000.

The acquisition is part of Anglo Irish's intention to build "a diversified loan book in the medium-sized corporate and professional market in both the UK and Ireland".

Bank		Rate	
Bids		Offers	
Australia \$	2.17	2.01	
Austria Sch	18.54	18.04	
Belgium Fr	48.40	44.10	
Canada \$	2.230	2.070	
Cyprus Cyp	0.760	0.68	
Denmark Kr	8.17	0.69	
Finland Mark	7.22	6.57	
France Fr	8.02	7.15	
Germany Dm	2.36	2.15	
Greece Dr	388.00	361.00	
Hong Kong	12.86	11.58	
Ireland P	1.02	0.8	
Israel Shk	5.1200	4.6900	
Italy Lit	208.00	241.00	
Japan Yen	170.80	154.80	
Malaysia	0.582	0.587	
Netherlands Gld	2.627	2.397	
New Zealand \$	2.51	2.29	
Norway Kr	10.35	9.55	
Portugal Esc	243.00	244.50	
Spain Ptas	195.00	184.00	
Sweden Kr	10.84	10.04	
Switzerland F	1.91	1.75	
Turkey Lira	0.008	0.008	
USA \$	1.898	1.509	

Notes for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Offers and bids apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

□ Bancorp deal could mean cash for shareholders □ Byatt's plans do not add up □ Edwards looks for fresh funds

NatWest not so Fleet of foot

AT LAST NatWest has recognised the feelings of its long-suffering shareholders and given the first firm indication that it might consider returning their cash to them.

This is the only reason for a higher NatWest share price yesterday. Everything else about its agreement to sell Bancorp to Fleet Financial is disappointing. NatWest has been buying far smaller US banks for two and a half times their book value; this deal values Bancorp at around 1.6 times. Even Derek Wanless could only manage a grudging "acceptable" in praise of the value of the sale.

The headline figure of \$3.56 billion is at the very bottom end of hopes that had ranged from \$4 billion to \$5 billion. In fact, on further analysis the price is not even that attractive. It is a convoluted deal designed, in part, to get around the pain that Fleet would suffer in its profit and loss account by paying cash for a subsidiary of a foreign-owned organisation. If it had been buying a stand-alone US bank, Fleet would have been able to use merger accounting to avoid the problem of amortisation of goodwill by merging the two.

NatWest is buying back unwanted assets of \$400 million, which takes the consideration down to \$3.16 billion. To assist

Fleet in its goodwill problem, \$560 million is deferred for up to eight years and subject to an earn-out, taking the initial sum down to \$2.6 billion. NatWest could end up with cash of just \$2.125 billion on completion next May, plus another \$475 million in Fleet stock, only part of which it could sell for cash at once.

There is no disputing the logic of a sale. NatWest would have needed to spend substantial amounts of cash to fight on with Bancorp and maintain its position in New York and New Jersey. Other options, including a partial stock market flotation and selling off the bank in parts, have been ruled out. With the sale, NatWest has achieved its aim of pulling out of retail banking in the US in one go.

The sale removes uncertainty and leaves the bank free to devote capital to its core businesses, from which it would hope to generate a higher rate of return and where there is certainly room for improvement. NatWest has not done as well as some competitors at increasing income from fees and commissions and its large corporate loan

book is tying up capital at low margins. On return on equity, NatWest is one of the poor performers of the sector, with a 18 per cent against an average of over 20 per cent.

The sale will depress earnings per share — by around 7 per cent in a normal year. The bank may need to buy back its shares simply in order to maintain their earnings. Although NatWest was refusing to give any clue yesterday about how it would use the proceeds, there will be real pressure to use newly gained powers to buy back shares and provide shareholders with a real return at last.

Comparators are onerous

MEMO to anyone shopping for presents for a regulator: socks and ties always come in handy, but you can never have too many comparators. Regulators are deeply attached to their comparators, and this year's wave of bids for regulated companies has severely depleted their number just in time for Christmas.

PENNINGTON



One of them, Ian Byatt, at Ofwat, has come up with a novel scheme to maintain supplies. Yesterday was the last date for comments to him and his colleague at Ofwat over the Welsh Water bid for South Wales Electricity, and both will shortly be putting their views to the Office of Fair Trading.

The merger would create a super-utility similar to that already existing in the North West, and strip Stephen Littlechild at Ofwat of one more quoted company in his sector — he is already down to just seven, poor lamb — while radically changing the nature of Welsh Water.

Mr Byatt wants a separate stock market quote for the core water business, a quarter of it to

be held by outside investors. He has also written to North West Water, now merging with Norweb, asking it to do the same. Lyonnaise des Eaux, of France, which is buying Northumbrian Water, has agreed to follow suit, but rather tentatively and by the year 2005.

Mr Byatt says that such a separate listing provides him with a comparator for his work of setting prices between the various companies, and would also give a parallel. City valuation of the business. Otherwise is the implication, he might call for the whole bid to be referred.

Significantly, Professor Littlechild is not making the same plea to any of the bidders in his sector. Perhaps he thinks, quite rightly, it is a lousy idea.

The City takes against such minority holdings, which would by definition be valued without any bid premium. The price tag reached by the market is likely to be spurious, therefore, while such holdings would presumably also have to be created retroactively for all the other companies taken over. It is hard to see how the regulators' jobs

can be made any easier by the creation of some weird little kindergarden of quoted minorities in regulated utilities.

Staring into the coal pit

THE phrase "pending clarification of the company's financial position" has an ominous ring, the corporate equivalent of "the patient's condition is giving rise to some concern". The eventual clarification for shareholders all too often makes one thing clear: their investment is worthless.

Coal Investments has already said that the £50 million raised by investors so far since it bought the duff end of British Coal would not be enough to fund the investment needed to bring its six collieries up to scratch.

But Malcolm Edwards, founder and executive chairman, was confident little more than a fortnight ago that his creation would be in the black from next month. So yesterday's announcement came as a nasty shock even to investors already braced to put up fresh funds.

No one is willing to predict the result of continuing talks with the banks, but Coal Investments is probably still on track to raise £15 million of fresh equity. Yesterday's suspension was to ensure an orderly market after news of a planning reversal at Hem Heath Colliery, near Stoke-on-Trent.

The colliery had hoped to cut under a Grade A listed building, to the discomfort of its owners. The defeat is not a terminal one. But contrast the situation at Coal Investments with RJB Mining, which took the more profitable half of British Coal and was handing out festive bonuses to workers last week. And imagine the howls if any of the buyers of British Coal were to be allowed to collapse.

Flight of fancy

THE normally redoubtable Consumers' Association has gone too far in criticising tour operators such as First Choice who push their own product through their high street travel shops. On any scale of difficult life decisions a holiday ranks a long way behind a mortgage or a pension. The local travel agent should no more be required to be an independent adviser than Sainsbury's should be forced to sell Marks & Spencer's own Christmas puddings.

Coats Viyella and Courtaulds issue warnings

By SARAH BAGNALL

COATS VIYELLA and Courtaulds Textiles, two of Britain's largest clothing manufacturers, yesterday revealed the extent of the damage wreaked by the unusually mild autumn weather by issuing surprise profit warnings to their shareholders.

For both companies, the months from August to the end of November are the four most important of the financial year.

Traditionally, the quarter accounts for about two thirds of annual clothing profits and, therefore, the performance over the period is critical in

determining profit levels for the full year.

The companies yesterday said that the abnormal weather during these crucial months was principally to blame for the warning that full-year profits would fall to match the levels achieved last year. The warm weather severely depressed demand for winter clothes, such as knitwear and coats.

Textile companies have also been hit by rising raw material prices, which they have not been able to pass on to their customers. Some easing in prices has begun to emerge.

The warnings prompted analysts to cut their profit forecasts. The news sent shares of Courtaulds Textiles, which is focused on clothing and fabrics, down 24p at 373p. About 25 per cent of the total sales of Courtaulds Textiles are to Marks & Spencer.

However, shares of Coats Viyella, Britain's biggest clothing maker, slipped only 1p to 169p. The shares were held up by the news, also released yesterday, that the search for a new finance director had been completed with the appointment of Kirk Stephenson, who is currently finance director at Amersham International. Mr Stephenson, joins Coats Viyella in April, replacing Jeff Phillips who resigned in September, after six months in the job.

Neville Bain, chief executive at Coats Viyella, said profits before tax and exceptional items in the year to December 31 are expected to be "slightly" below the lower end of market expectations. This prompted analysts to cut their forecasts from between £47.5 million and £52 million to £42 million to £45 million. This compares with last year's pre-exceptional profit of £52.4 million.

Mr Bain said that profits from the Indian business were expected to fall, but that the thread business, which accounts for about half of total sales, was progressing well, as was its precision engineering operation.

Forecasts for Courtaulds Textiles' profit before tax and exceptional items were cut by up to £7 million, to £40 million. Noel Jervis, chief executive, said: "We had a pretty good first half, but we have had a real problem in the autumn, when the weather was exceptionally warm."

The company said demand had picked up in the UK during December, but the results for the month will largely depend on the performance in France and America, which together account for 25 per cent of sales. The group has been hit by depressed demand in both countries. Mr Jervis said the board expects to maintain the final dividend.



Francis Baron, flanked by a Beefeater and a Mountie, hopes to protect First Choice profits

First Choice banks on holiday cut

By SARAH BAGNALL

FRANCIS BARON, chief executive at First Choice, said he hoped the decision by Britain's tour operators to cut the number of holidays on offer next summer by 1.5 million would be enough to boost the company's flagging profits.

He said January would be the key month in determining whether the 15 per cent cut in capacity would prevent another summer of swinging price cuts.

He said that First Choice, Britain's third biggest tour operator, was also cutting the commissions paid to travel agents, which will limit the size of discounts offered by agents. Mr Baron made his remarks as he reported a slump in pre-tax profits from £16.3 million to £1.3 million in the year to October 31. The decline, which included £1.1 million of redundancy costs, was in line with expectations after a profit warning.

The company is dipping into reserves to help pay a maintained final dividend of 2.45p, which makes a total for the year of 3.85p. The dividend is payable on April 12. Earnings per share slipped from 5.1p to a loss of 1.7p. The shares remained unchanged at 64p.

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Central Transport steers new course

By GEORGE SIVELL

CENTRAL Transport Rental, formerly known as Tiphook, told long-suffering followers yesterday that it "anticipated" presenting financial restructuring proposals to shareholders during this financial year, which ends in April.

The restructuring is likely to involve a heavy debt and bond swap for shares that would dilute the holdings of existing shareholders substantially.

Yesterday, Central Transport reported a £12.8 million pre-tax loss in the six months to the end of October. Debts fell to £482.8 million, supported by shareholders funds showing a £500,000 deficit.

The accounts were drawn up on a "going concern basis", which is only valid if the company continues trading for the foreseeable future and that the proposed reconstruction goes ahead. In May 1998, the group has to repay \$119.4

million of US public bonds, which could not be paid without obtaining alternative borrowing facilities. The group's banks have provided working capital facilities until May 1998.

Jan Clubb, chairman, said: "The form of financial restructuring currently being progressed would involve the conversion of a significant amount of the group's existing bond and bank debt into new ordinary shares."

He added: "While there is a considerable amount of work to be done to agree details of such a restructuring — and until such an agreement is reached and documented there can be no certainty as to the outcome — shareholders should be aware that such a restructuring would involve a significant dilution of their equity interests in the company."

Buyback costs NatPower £260m

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

NATIONAL POWER, the UK's largest generator, has spent more than £260 million in a surprise move to buy back a chunk of its shares.

The company, whose bid for Southern Electric is being looked at by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, went into the market yesterday to buy 57 million shares at 428p. The purchase, equivalent to 4.4 per cent of its capital, was signalled at National Power's annual meeting but the timing was unexpected.

National Power is responding to MMC inquiries over its wish to buy Southern. A report is due from the commission by March 22. The company denied that ploughing £260 million into a buyback indicated that it had gone cold on the idea. A spokesman said: "It has always been our intention to buy back a proportion of the shares and now seemed a good opportunity with the price having fallen."

The share price has tumbled since Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, referred the bid for Southern, along with that by PowerGen for Midlands Electricity, to the MMC. The buy-back will boost



Lang: referred bids

Cash from Warner-Lambert joint venture will repay debt

Glaxo Wellcome sale to earn \$1bn

By ERIC REGULY

GLAXO WELLCOME has agreed to sell its share of one of its two joint ventures with Warner-Lambert, the American pharmaceuticals company, for \$1 billion in cash. It is the first significant disposal since Glaxo bought Wellcome early this year for £9.3 billion.

The money will be used to pay off some of the debt taken on by Glaxo to finance the Wellcome acquisition. The City welcomed the effort to reduce Glaxo's net debt, which stands at about £3.5 billion; the shares, which were trading at 861p in a falling market before the announcement, closed at 878p, down 7p. The joint venture being sold was set up by Wellcome and Warner-Lambert

early last year. It distributed non-prescription drugs, such as Ascid and Listerine, that were produced by both companies. Sales are expected to exceed \$1.6 billion this year.

Glaxo said that the joint venture did not fit into its long-term strategy. The company is more concerned with marketing over-the-counter versions of prescription drugs than non-prescription drugs.

Glaxo will keep its other joint venture with Warner-Lambert, which was launched in 1993 to market over-the-counter versions of Glaxo's prescription drugs. Profits from these "switched" drugs were shared equally, with Glaxo receiving a royalty on the sales. The joint

venture will be restructured to include other products, including an over-the-counter version of Zovirax, a cream for cold sores. Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo's chief executive, said: "We are pleased to announce agreement in principle to the establishment of a new, simplified relationship with Warner-Lambert whereby, through a single joint venture, Glaxo will continue to develop over-the-counter opportunities for its research-based prescription products."

The company said it expected to complete the sale of the joint venture before next summer.

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THIS ANNOUNCEMENT APPEARS AS A MATTER OF RECORD ONLY

Management Buy-In of Weddel Swift Ltd

Working capital facilities of £6.79m provided by Confidential Invoice Discounting Ltd. Structured, led and arranged by

BARNES MENZIES CORPORATE FINANCE

Confidential Invoice Discounting Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of International Factors



INSTANT INCOME FROM INVOICES

International Factors, Sovereign House, Church Street, Brighton BN1 1SS Tel: 0800 521371 Fax: 01273 207651

Profit warnings test nerves of investors

INVESTORS in London struggled to regain their composure in volatile trading after the shock of Monday's 101-point tumble on Wall Street and profit warnings from some well-known UK companies further tested nerves in a jittery City.

An initial markdown was followed by widespread profit-taking in early trading after Wall Street's opening after the overnight slide in New York. Many investors simply decided to lock in some of the profits they have enjoyed after the recent bull run.

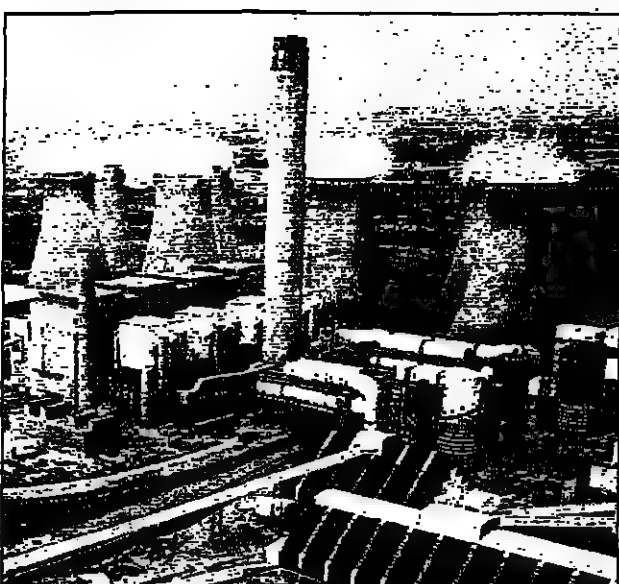
Traders were additionally concerned about the possibility of more program trades when trading resumed across the Atlantic. There was also short-covering and uncertainty before the Federal Reserve Open Market Committee meeting on interest rates, while the US budget impasse continued.

A 37-point fall for the FT-SE 100 index at one point largely corresponded to the losses suffered in New York after the London market had closed on Monday. However, a mildly positive, if uncertain, start on Wall Street helped to bolster late London trading, although the next few days will be influenced by Wall Street's direction. The FT-SE 100 index partly recovered to end 19.2 lower at 3,576.9. Volume, boosted by stock-squaring and large one-off trades, reached 827 million shares.

Volume was boosted by a bumper block of 19.5 million shares in National Power, up 2p to 429p, as it bought back 57 million of its own shares for cancellation, paying 428p a share in the market. The £44 million deal is expected to be earnings enhancing, although it will increase gearing. When added to the 7.6 per cent bought earlier in the year from the Government, National Power has reduced its market capital by 12 per cent.

Elsewhere in the sector, PowerGen gained 12p to 514p, boosted by reports of a Humber electricity supply contract. National Grid dipped 1p to 199p, on heavy volume of 50.6 million shares, with Salomon Brothers said to have been involved in a bought deal of 25 million shares originating from Southern Electric of the US, which recently acquired South Western Electricity.

Among banks, National Westminster stood out with a 19p advance to 649p on



National Power bought back 57 million of its own shares

confirmation of the sale of the group's US commercial and retail banking operations to Fleet Financial Group, a US-based financial services company, in a \$3.56 billion deal.

Elsewhere in the sector, Bank of Scotland fell 7p to 277p, Barclays 5p to 751p, Lloyds 9p to 830p, Royal Bank of Scotland 17p to 568p and TSB 3p to 392p. However, Abbey Nat-

ional, which is expected to benefit from mortgage rate cuts, enjoyed an 8p rise to 627p, with dealers saying the stock has been oversold.

The market was pleased with the move by BTR to sell Dunlop Slazenger, its sports equipment division, to CINVEN in a deal worth more than £300 million. BTR rose to 322p before ending unchanged at 316p, on volume of

9.9 million shares. Among other international companies with strong dollar-related interests, Cadbury-Schweppes fell 17p to 530p, BOC Group 15p to 881p, RTZ 16p to 930p, Standard Chartered 19p to 546p, Bass 18p to 692p, Siebe 16p to 766p, and General Accident, which has a large exposure to US bonds, 20p to 623p. Glaxo Wellcome lost

Shares in PolyMASC, a biopharmaceutical company that intends to license products and processes to the pharmaceutical and medical diagnostics industry, made a healthy debut on the Alternative Investment Market. The shares raced to 152p, before settling at 129p, compared with a 100p placing price.

High-yielding defensive blue-chip stocks weathered the storm best. Hanson firmed 1p to 185p, on volume of 20 million shares, while GEC climbed 1p to 317p, TI 2p to 429p and North West Water 7p to 587p. British Gas advanced 10p to 239p, on volume of 18.6 million shares traded as investors decided that the worst was known after the appointment of a special negotiator to deal with take-or-pay contracts, while vague talk of a bid from Shell, down 8p to 834p, resurfaced.

Courtauld Textiles dived 24p to 373p as brokers downgraded profit forecasts after the group issued a profits warning after a deterioration in trading conditions, unseasonal weather and margin erosion.

Coats Viyella also said that its full-year clean profit was expected to be slightly below the lower end of market forecasts. The shares dipped 1p to 169p.

W Canning tumbled 18p to 212p after it issued a cautious trading statement and profits warning, while Eurotherm fell 18p to 536p after accompanying high full-year profits with a cautious statement on future growth. Laporte fell 24p to 641p, depressed by negative noises from James Capel.

But Vosper Thornycroft steamed 16p higher to 803p on news that it is part of a consortium that has won a Royal Navy training contract through a joint venture with GEC Marconi.

Stagecoach, the bus group, drove to an 11p gain to 293p after it was awarded the South West Trains rail franchise for seven years, the first rail line to move into private hands.

Tarmac rose 4p to 109p after a reiterated buy recommendation from SBC Warburg in the wake of the Wimpey asset swap.

GILT-EDGED: Nervous overseas bond markets dragged gilts lower in thin trading, although domestic buying helped to trim losses. The March long gilt future ended 19 ticks lower at £109.93, on volume of 51,000 contracts. Among conventional stocks, shorts fell by up to 10 ticks, but ultra longs underperformed and losses stretched to 4%. Index-linked fell ten ticks.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were mixed in early trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 2.53 points at 5,077.74.

20p to 855p in spite of news that it is restructuring its OTC joint venture with Warner-Lambert by selling Wellcome's OTC interests to Warner-Lambert for £1.05 billion. Zeneca fell 21p to £12.18 in spite of US Food and Drug Administration clearance for its Zoladex treatment for breast cancer.

High-yielding defensive blue-chip stocks weathered the storm best. Hanson firmed 1p to 185p, on volume of 20 million shares, while GEC climbed 1p to 317p, TI 2p to 429p and North West Water 7p to 587p. British Gas advanced 10p to 239p, on volume of 18.6 million shares traded as investors decided that the worst was known after the appointment of a special negotiator to deal with take-or-pay contracts, while vague talk of a bid from Shell, down 8p to 834p, resurfaced.

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But Vosper Thornycroft steamed 16p higher to 803p on news that it is part of a consortium that has won a Royal Navy training contract through a joint venture with GEC Marconi.

Stagecoach, the bus group, drove to an 11p gain to 293p after it was awarded the South West Trains rail franchise for seven years, the first rail line to move into private hands.

Tarmac rose 4p to 109p after a reiterated buy recommendation from SBC Warburg in the wake of the Wimpey asset swap.

GILT-EDGED: Nervous overseas bond markets dragged gilts lower in thin trading, although domestic buying helped to trim losses. The March long gilt future ended 19 ticks lower at £109.93, on volume of 51,000 contracts. Among conventional stocks, shorts fell by up to 10 ticks, but ultra longs underperformed and losses stretched to 4%. Index-linked fell ten ticks.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were mixed in early trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was up 2.53 points at 5,077.74.

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5077.74 (+25.5)
S&P Composite 606.84 (+0.03)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 19140.49 (+170.99)
Hang Seng 9705.86 (+103.72)

Hong Kong:
SSE Index 47251 (+174)

Sydney:
AO 2182.80 (+24.93)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3226.62 (+30.37)

Singapore:
Straits 2187.34 (+13.29)

Brussels:
General 8253.34 (+74.24)

Paris:
CAC-40 1010.21 (+10.26)

Zurich:
SIX 6613.50 (+9.29)

London:
FT 30 2594.3 (+4.8)
FT 100 3876.9 (+19.2)
FT-SE Mid 250 3937.4 (+16.8)
FT-SE 250 1778.6 (+4.1)
FT-SE Eurotrack 100 1450.49 (+15.23)
FT A All-Share 1753.78 (+5.04)
FT Non Financials 1899.4 (+4.50)
FT Pooled Interest 1143.1 (+0.65)
FT Govt Secs 95.53 (+0.49)
Bargains 27556
S&P Volume 922.9m
USA (Dunstan) 185.92 (+1.38)
USA 1.5433 (+0.0003)
German Mark 2.2160 (+0.0029)
Exchange Index 829 (+0.4)
Bank of England official close (4pm)
1.1787
EBCU 1.0352
RPI 149.8 Nov (1994) Jan 1997-100
RPIX 149.8 Nov (1994) Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

Abstract H Inc C (100) 95% - 1
CMG (200) 327 - 3
Cash Converters Intl 24 ...
Century Inns 118 ...
Com de Part Fin 510 ...
Conworth (150) 151 ...
Cox Insurance 110 ...
Dunelm 81 - 6
East Surrey NV 448 ...
Fins Tech Ltd (100) 102 + 1
Gardner (1) 134 ...
Geared Income C 98 ...
Gearhouse Cp (200) 203 - 1
Jasmin 83 ...
London Town 80 ...
Mars & Oates 25 - 2
Martin Curry Jap 90 ...
Martin Curry Jap Ws 155 ...
National Grid (204) 199 - 1
Peptide Therapies (200) 230 - 1
Pet City 365 - 2
Polymasc Pharma 129 ...
Revelation Plc 100 ...
Rushmore Wynne 35 ...
Rushmore Wynne Ws 44 ...
Troader 130 - 1
Viewpoint 66 - 1
Wilmington 66 - 1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Dnase Hse n/p (100p) 1% ...
Melrose n/p (34) 4% - 2%
Roxspur n/p (3) 4% ...
TBI n/p (50) 3% ...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:
British Gas 229p (+101p)
Sagecom 239p (+11p)
Nat West 649p (+19p)
FALLS:
W Canning 212p (-18p)
Pacer Systems 185p (-13p)
Paton 785p (-80p)
Courtauld Text 373p (-24p)
Scoble 225p (-33p)
Standard Chart 546p (-19p)
Telepath 82p (-32p)
Laporte 641p (-24p)

Closing Prices Page 27

EMPUS

No riches, only rags

TWO profit warnings from textile companies should have a sobering effect on any investor who thought the new year would bring cheer to the rag trade. In fact, the outlook for profits is grim and there are good reasons to believe that by the end of 1996 there will be considerably fewer people employed in the industry in the UK than there are currently.

Courtauld's trading statement contained more news than that of Coats Viyella and was all the more alarming for it. Weak sales of winter garments because of warm weather in the Autumn and the effect of the slow housing market on upholstery sales was hardly new. Likewise, comments about the state of the high street from Marks & Spencer should have put investors on notice that Courtauld, which makes a quarter of its sales from M&S, would be suffering price pressure from its

biggest customer. Had that been the end of the story Courtauld might have been able to maintain profit at last year's level but the upheaval in France and a sudden slowdown in America has tipped the balance into a decline. It appears to have been caught wrong-footed by a bout of destocking in the US. Facing slower than expected sales in December, the powerful American retailers are not filling racks and shelves fast enough to keep Courtauld happy.

In such an unforgiving world, businesses need to be both fleet of foot and low in cost. Coats and Courtauld will benefit from a softening in the price of raw materials next year. However, there is no sign that the consumer is ready to spend more, and the pressure is on the rag trade to seek low-cost solutions offshore.

First Choice

JUST as Britain's tour operators caused the holiday glut and collapse in profits, so the industry's salvation rests in their hands. Last summer was probably the worst on record for operators, who tore up the year's profits in a frenzy of discounting as they attempted to shift unsold holidays. Industry net margins fell from about 6 per cent to less than 2 per cent while the return at First Choice slipped below 1 per cent.

The summer 1996 season will shape up. Early indications are far from favourable, with bookings down sharply in the run-up to Christmas. First Choice suffered a 14 per cent drop by the end of November, against a 30 per cent decline for the industry. Lower bookings prompted

Glaxo

WELLCOME's joint venture with Warner-Lambert was never a great success for the former company and Glaxo Wellcome has done well to exit from the arrangement with \$1 billion in cash and a continuing joint venture through which to market medicines in over-the-counter form.

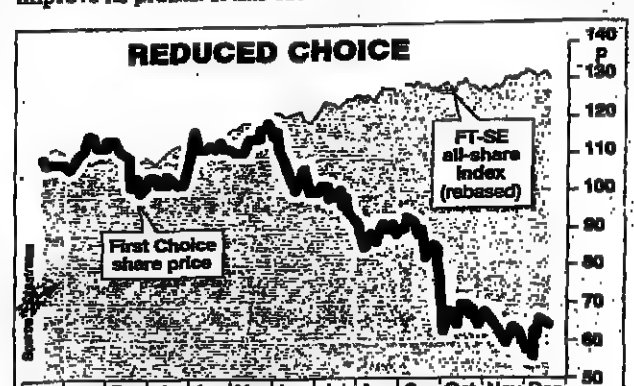
The original Warner-Wellcome joint venture was more than just an agreement to sell Wellcome products and the latter company suffered an unexpected restructuring charge of £52 million when the joint venture was set up. However, the main setback for Wellcome was the failure to secure approval from the FDA for sale in the USA of its OTC version of Zovirax. The terms of the joint venture gave Wellcome half of the European profits but only 30 per cent of the profits in the United States. Approval for Zovirax would have increased Wellcome's

a cut in capacity of about 15 per cent - equating to 1.5 million fewer holidays - in a bid to bring supply back in line with demand. The key indicator is January which typically accounts for about a quarter of sales.

First Choice is not relying on the volume reduction to improve its profits. It has cut

costs and improved the profit mix of by moving to higher-margin all-inclusive holidays. These now account for 20 per cent of sales from nil last year.

However, the outcome still depends on the mood of consumers in the new year and cautious investors will keep First Choice off the Christmas shopping list.



return from the joint venture and the medicine, which is still seeking US approval, will form part of the continuing joint venture with Warner-Lambert.

The OTC medicines being sold to Warner-Lambert have revenues of about \$360 million and Glaxo has done well to achieve about 3 times sales in a transaction where there was no alternative buyer. The cash will help reduce some £3.3 billion of debt but, with interest cover of 15 times, Glaxo was never under pressure.

Eurotherm

LIKE a corporate Santa, Eurotherm, the electronics company, comes bearing Christmas gifts. Yesterday, the company raised profits for the fifth consecutive year and looks set to deliver forecast profits of £40 million next year.

Such an impressive performance has attracted hattering City attention and Euro-

therm shares sit on a hefty premium of 40 per cent to the market multiple. Just reward, perhaps, for Claes Huitman, the chief executive, but a disincentive to invest in the shares.

Unlike Santa, Eurotherm is growing up into a company that shareholders can still believe in. Some of the company's products have faced a delayed market response and should continue to benefit from an upswing. Operating margins can be pushed up further, while Eurotherm's strong cash generation should easily support any ambitions to acquire businesses. Eurotherm continued to grow during the last recession, a record that should provide support for the shares when the cycle moves downwards again, as well as a stronger product base. Next year's forecast allows for a slowdown, a margin of comfort that should keep investors holding the stock even at this high price.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA
Dec 890-900 Mar 1001-1002
May 910-920 Sep 1010-1011
Jul 920-930 Jan 1020-1021
Oct 930-940 Apr 1030-1031
Dec 940-950 Sep 1040-1041
Jul 950-960 Jan 1050-1051
Oct 960-970 Apr 1060-1061
Dec 970-980 Sep 1070-1071
Jul 980-990 Jan 1080-1081
Oct 990-1000 Apr 1090-1091
Dec 1000-1010 Sep 1100-1101
Jul 1010-1020 Jan 1110-1111
Oct 1020-1030 Apr 1120-1121
Dec 1030-1040 Sep 1130-1131
Jul 1040-1050 Jan 1140-1141
Oct 1050-1060 Apr 1150-1151
Dec 1060-1070 Sep 1160-1161
Jul 1070-1080 Jan 1170-1171
Oct 1080-1090 Apr 1180-1181
Dec 1090-1100 Sep 1190-1191
Jul 1100-1110 Jan 1200-1201
Oct 1110-1120 Apr 1210-1211
Dec 1120-1130 Sep 1220-1221
Jul 1130-1140 Jan 1230-1231
Oct 1140-1150 Apr 1240-1241
Dec 1150-1160 Sep 1250-1251
Jul 1160-1170 Jan 1260-1261
Oct 1170-1180 Apr 1270-1271
Dec 1180-1190 Sep 1280-1281
Jul 1190-1200 Jan 1290-1291
Oct 1200-1210 Apr 1300-1301
Dec 1210-1220 Sep 1310-1311
Jul 1220-1230 Jan 1320-1321
Oct 1230-1240 Apr 1330-1331
Dec 1240-1250 Sep 1340-1341
Jul 1250-1260 Jan 1350-1351
Oct 1260-1270 Apr 1360-136

rag

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Mince pies on the line

THE Docklands Light Railway has not made its name by spreading good cheer. But yesterday, the railway, which serves Canary Wharf and London's Docklands, managed to bring a Christmas smile to commuters—by serving up mince pies to rush-hour passengers. The festive gesture, at Bank station, was appreciated, and the ticket checker was later greeted with some warmth rather than the usual grudging response.

FURTHER in our series about Christmas cards comes one from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales that bears the message "Beware of False Profits".

Out of view

MEANWHILE, recipients of Railtrack's Christmas card may wonder just what message the company is trying to send out. Railtrack's card sports a photograph, captioned "Misty Blue, taken by John Bracken, a signalman. The scene depicts the view from Wye Signal box near Ashford, Kent" — and shows no trains, fog overhead, or snow on the line.

Guidelines

FIRST-TIME visitors to Singapore, where Nick Leeson is currently in residence, should take heed of advice handed out to tourists on arrival. Fines are imposed for littering, smoking in prohibited places, not flushing the toilet, road hogging, urinating in lifts, selling chewing gum.



Heads or tails

JOHN RITBLAT, the arriving chairman, secures my vote for brightening up British Land's interim report, out yesterday, with a front and back cover picture of works by George Stubbs. Ritblat chose four horses, and, reflecting British Land's half-time results, has appended the caption "Heads down tails up at the interim stage". Whatever can be in store for year-end results?

Pat on back?

ABN Agro Hoare Govett is really asking for it. The firm's smaller companies team has sent clients a festive quiz, and answers to the clues are the names of the companies the firm researches. The tie-breaker is not more than 12 words to the statement: ABN Agro Hoare Govett is my favourite broker because...

Free market

CITY workers and shoppers desperately searching for a taxi in the miserable weather must envy the entrepreneurial spirit discovered by Patrick Davis, chief executive of the Food from Britain campaign. He has just returned from Moscow, where he headed a delegation of British food manufacturers. One night when he stepped out of his hotel to hail a taxi half the street stopped. "Not one of them was a licensed taxi. They were all private cars anxious to make a rapid couple — and ready to negotiate," says Patrick.

COLIN CAMPBELL

Can South Africa match the 'tigers' of South-East Asia?

Foreign investors are waking up to the possibilities, but remain cautious, says Joanna Pitman

One of the last wild frontiers. That is how an American investment banker described the African continent as a punt for those interested in the rawest kind of high-risk, high-return investment. If you consider that South-East Asia, Latin America, India and China have been "emerging" for some time now, that does indeed leave only Russia and Africa as the last frontier investments.

However, South Africa, classified as part of the African emerging market, stands out as something of an anomaly. Economically, it is an unusual hybrid of first and third worlds. It has a sophisticated infrastructure and highly developed business and financial services sectors at one extreme and mass poverty at the other.

Eighteen months on since the elections that replaced the white oligarchy with black majority rule, South Africa is still in transition — politically, socially and economically. This is not unexpected, but it does militate against a sudden flood of confident inward investment. South Africa can offer the potential of sustainable above-average growth and the potential for high net returns. But there is also great uncertainty about that potential being realised. Since the lifting of sanctions, foreign investors have been waking up to the possibilities, encouraged by the abolition of foreign-exchange controls, but in most sectors, they have been cautious, waiting for firm indicators of stability and growth.

The basic economic indicators are mixed. Compared with mature industrial economies, South Africa's growth rate has been respectable since its recovery in 1992 from its worst recession. GDP growth has hovered around 3 per cent for the past three years and is on track for a further 3 per cent growth this year. However, when the country's rapid population growth is taken into account, per capita income growth falls short of that of mature economies. Unemployment runs at 45 per cent, the budget deficit stands at 5.8 per cent of GDP, and inflation is running at 9 per cent.

However, looking more closely at the corporate sector, where much of the growth potential lies, South Africa is well served with large companies with multinational ambitions, over 50 of which have market capitalisations of more than \$1 billion and between them account for 20 per cent of all large companies in emerging markets worldwide. There are also 26 foreign firms employing staffs of more than 1,000. Lufthansa is the largest with 23,000, followed by Volkswagen, which employs 8,000.

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange is strong and has been building liquidity since its own "big bang" on November 8. This, like London's, allowed corporate entities and foreign firms to become members, enabled brokers and market-makers to operate



President Mandela at the now stronger Johannesburg Stock Exchange

together, and abolished fixed commissions. The open cry system is scheduled to change over to screens next March. The big bang prompted a flood of foreign investment interest and a spate of tie-ups with South African brokers by European brokers including James Capel, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, SG Warburg and Smith New Court, now owned by Merrill Lynch. At least ten of the foreign brokers have set up Africa funds such as Morgan Stanley's \$230 million fund listed in New York.

Johannesburg's stock exchange is ranked tenth in the world in market capitalisation and liquidity levels since big bang have reached 8-10 per cent with a daily turnover of up to 500 million rand. Business confidence is good, the country has a reasonable skills base, a sophisticated banking sector, a broad natural resource base, efficient transport and communications, low-cost energy and labour and the potential emergence of a burgeoning black consumer market. The

domestic market numbers 39 million and is growing fast. If there were ten million Southern African Common Market today, it would have a population of 125 million. And with the South African Government's ongoing reconstruction and development programme, spending power and demand for goods should increase quickly. It is this last factor that has prompted the World Bank to state that South Africa has the potential to match the South-East Asian 'tigers' in economic growth.

Of course, it takes time for perceptions to change. South African companies are being forced to become more competitive, more international. There are a lot of potential opportunities here," says John Morris, head of research at Smith Borkum, formerly Davis Borkum Hair and now owned by Merrill Lynch. But there are many socio-economic issues that could hold back the realisation of all this potential. Unemployment runs at levels far higher than 45 per cent in the black and

coloured townships, there is a severe lack of skills among the dispossessed masses, and crime and violence figures make grim reading. While political violence has largely abated, street crime driven by drug gangs is virtually endemic in large cities. In the Gauteng region, the industrial and mining heartland with a population of ten million, for example, there were 2,493 murders and 22,038 robberies reported in the first six months of this year. The police are overstretched, underpaid and possibly inadequately trained.

Politically, the country is still riding on the euphoria of its peaceful democratic elections, but the coalition between President Mandela and FW de Klerk, Second Deputy President, is undermined by such a degree of uncertainty that flashpoints, for example the publication next May of a new constitution, could prompt resignations. Investors naturally question the outcome of a post-Mandela political transition, anxious that the coalition relies too heavily on his personal reputation of integrity; but local political analysts point out that there is no shortage of credible candidates to replace him, including Thabo Mbeki, the First Deputy President, who has won respect at home and abroad.

And the economy appears to be in surprisingly good hands. Given that not long ago the ANC was theoretically in favour of a command economy, the new Government has surprised many with its fiscal prudence. Schooled in the IMF approach to macroeconomics, the ANC has with its first two budgets, established its economic governing credentials displaying tight fiscal and monetary policies.

Desmond Blumenfeld, professor of economics at Brunel University, said: "The Government has done little or nothing to damage its credentials. It's been a remarkable performance. They've been very pragmatic in saying they can only invest what they can afford." But if the Government has an acceptable idea economically of what to do, the question remains whether it can implement its ideas effectively while maintaining its fragile stability.

This is what appears to be holding back new large-scale direct investors. None is rushing in, but American firms that disinvested in the 1980s are coming back, particularly since the US Government is officially encouraging investment in South Africa as one of its top ten emerging markets. One American banker said: "A lot of the new investment is by firms which sold out in the late 1980s. They know the business."

PepsiCo, for example, has bought back into the market and now has a 50-50 venture with a local food company. Since the early 1990s, European firms including Alcatel, of France, and Vodafone, of the UK, have either reinvested or put in fresh investment. BMW, which remained in the sanctions era, has also increased its investment.

Asian investors are being courted actively. South Korea has begun to invest in electronic assembly plants and Malaysia in property ventures. Taiwan, one of the few countries to maintain full diplomatic and commercial ties during the sanctions era, is also seen as a major potential investor. A state-owned Chinese company announced a \$70 million investment in a chrome mine last week, but such direct investments creating new capacity and new jobs are still few and far between.



Stage is set for panto season in Euroland

The Spirit of Christmas seems to have appeared a day or two early in Madrid. Special preview: Helmut and his Emu in "Mother Goose". Secret numbers! Magic illusions! See Judo Jack Chirac escape by yielding! See the wicked Major (hiss) smothered in foam!

And do you believe it, children? ... oh, come now. It won't happen if you don't believe it. And look at lovely cuddly Uncle Helmut. He believes it. So let's try again. First, on the left: do you believe it? There, that's better. And now on the right. What? You still don't? Just wait while we tell you again. So, what's going to happen in 1999? What, nothing? Look what you've done to poor Uncle. He's crying. But it will be all right on the night. Oh yes it will!

For the grown-ups, there remains a serious question: just who are they trying to fool? One can see that enthusiasts for EMU may want to stick to the 1999 deadline for as long as it is at all plausible. It fills the role that the IMF used to play, as the scapegoat for necessary but unpopular policies. But if the Germans are to be believed when they protest that EMU without France is unthinkable, then plausibility vanishes.

The unhappy M Juppé put forward an "essential" programme of reforms. The trade unions challenged it, and they won (oh yes they did).

It may still be possible, with the aid of the Bundesbank and a good trade performance, to defend the franc fort (but watch for the effect of nuclear test indignation on French exports). But the strikes will leave French revenue somewhat lower, and the resulting concessions will make spending sharply higher.

Although four years is getting on for half a world trade cycle, the chances of France meeting the fiscal demand of Maastricht by 1999 now depend on massive tax increases, which would be economically ill-timed and politically near-impossible.

So we are back where the curtain rose. Why the panto-

mime? One popular explanation is that the Europeans are simply waiting for Tony Blair. A change in the Maastricht timetable would require an amendment to the treaty itself, but amendment is an open-ended process. With the British in their present mood, it could lead to endless difficulties. So let's go on pretending. When the British have elected a more self-confident and Euro-friendly government, they might join in tackling the difficulties in "a spirit of constructive engagement". In short, delay is inevitable, but not yet.

This could explain the pretence, but it does not explain either the air of near-desperation in the Franco-German drive for EMU, nor the string of Euro-proposals for ever-higher hurdles to be cleared by new entrants: still less of the simultaneous German drive for enlargement, which can only increase the number of countries which would not qualify for years to come.

Indeed, the whole German programme appears to be self-contradictory, so a second explanation is that there is no coherent German programme at all. The Chancellor is more a juggler who hopes that at least one of his balls will stay up.

Conspiracy theorists may prefer the secret agenda offered this week by Stephen Lewis, of London Bill Broking. He suggests that the Germans may already have given up on the French and are stealthily preparing a smaller, stronger D-mark bloc. The German market would love this, but the French would undoubtedly see it as a threat; so the aim of the pantomime is to fool President Chirac, lest he should change hats and oppose the whole project.

A nasty, persuasive thesis, though Lewis admits that it has yet to be tested politically. For myself, I would not dream of supporting such a sinister suggestion in this season of goodwill. But there is not much time before 1996 to think of a better one. Meanwhile, let us all think about something quite different.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Lloyd's external members entitled to expect their interests to be defended

From Mr M. Deeny, Chairman, Litigating Names Committee

Sir, The recent letter from Mr Hiscox (December 15) shows a surprising lack of knowledge of the Reconstruction and Renewal proposals, for which he has some responsibility as a current member of the Council of Lloyd's.

It is not correct to state that the proposed offer is three times the amount that litigants could hope to achieve in court, since a substantial part of it will go to non-litigants and the defendants and their insurers have already reserved over a billion pounds in their own accounts to meet the litigants' claims.

Neither is it correct to

suggest that the Council of Lloyd's should be like a board of directors. There are separate constituencies represented on the council with working members, such as Mr Hiscox, and external members electing external members, such as myself. External members have suffered enormous losses in recent years and many feel that the council has failed to protect them.

The external members are entitled to expect that those they elected should defend their interests on the council. Yours faithfully, MICHAEL DEENY, Chairman, Litigating Names Committee, 60 Bedford Street, Salisbury.

Remove this discrimination

From Mrs Eleanor R. G. Barrott

Sir, I sympathise with your correspondent John Mendes (Business Letters, December 13) in having to suffer retrospective adjustments to effect appropriate taxation of the annuity contract on which he relies for part of his retirement income.

Were he a woman, he would find himself even further disadvantaged in that the proceeds of such arrangements are subject to an actuarial reduction, generally of the order of about 10 per cent, on account of the increased life expectancy of females. This form of discrimination is permitted because one is considered to be buying an annuity, not establishing the right to a pension.

I submit that the time is well overdue for the Government to remove this, and any other technical difference, and to ensure that these arrangements for providing for one's retirement, which they approve and encourage, are brought into line with occupational pensions, namely by being brought into the tax code system and in being required to use common actuarial tables for determining entitlements.

Yours faithfully, ELEANOR R. G. BARROTT, 17 Sandy Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Reform vital for system of auditor liability

From Mr Brian Currie

Sir, The recent judgment against BDO Binder Hamlyn and the indication that accountancy practices may be considering offshore registration of their businesses to protect partners' personal assets have both received extensive press coverage in the last week or so.

Both these developments reinforce our view that there is a need to move as a matter of urgency towards the introduction of a fairer system of liability for auditors.

Our case is a simple one. It is right that auditors should be liable to the extent of their responsibility for any losses that may have been suffered. The present method of determining liability, under which auditors are held jointly and severally, liable with other parties, is, however, fundamentally unfair in that auditors can end up being held

financially liable, not only for their own mistakes, but also for the mistakes of others. That is why we are seeking reform of joint and several liability and the right for auditors to be allowed under company law the normal commercial freedom to agree reasonable limits to their liability, subject to adequate safeguards for the interest of the shareholders. That is also the issue which we continue to press the Government to tackle and why we look forward with keen concern to the outcome of the current feasibility study by the Law Commission into the scope for reform.

Yours sincerely, BRIAN CURRIE, Deputy President, The Institute of Chartered Accountants, Chartered Accountants' Hall, PO Box 433, Moorgate Place, EC2.

Barings is losing its bearings

From Mr Richard Warden

Sir, In response to concerns about the £20 million bonuses for Barings' staff, a Barings source said: "People in corporate finance are some of the most beautiful and expensive people you will ever meet." If there is a Yuletide prize for insensitivity and arrogance towards the customer, surely it must go to Barings. We know Barings staff are expensive, to the tune of the £860 million debt incurred through improperly supervised dealings. We know it has been expensive for Barings' customers, the bondholders who face a potential £100 million loss.

The reverse side of the coin is that ordinary people are neither beautiful, ie, ugly, nor expensive, ie, cheap. What an arrogant view. Cannot the managers of Barings understand the public image their bank has? Their primary concern should be for their customers, not promoting egocentric views that are highly distasteful. Yours faithfully, RICHARD WARDEN, 2 Waterloo Way, Bredon, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

More fond memories

From Mrs J. P. Harborne

Sir, The Strand Palace obviously evokes many happy memories (Hidden Assets, November 25; Letters, December 12). Visiting London for the 1948 Oval Test against the Australians, my father's day was made when he bumped into his hero, Sir Jack Hobbs, in the foyer. "Le Ravier", the carvery where you could eat as much as you could for 3/6d, made more impression on me! Yours faithfully, JOAN HARBORNE, 1 Thirlmere Avenue, Grimsby, South Humberside.

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THE TIMES INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION SERVICE

هكذا من الأصل.

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

[illegible]

1996 High Low Company				Price +/- %			
157	117	Thru (Daguer)	153	-2	49	159	
158	119	120	158	-1	10	223	
159	121	122	159	-1	10	223	
160	123	124	160	-1	10	223	
161	125	126	161	-1	10	223	
162	127	128	162	-1	10	223	
163	129	130	163	-1	10	223	
164	131	132	164	-1	10	223	
165	133	134	165	-1	10	223	
166	135	136	166	-1	10	223	
167	137	138	167	-1	10	223	
168	139	140	168	-1	10	223	
169	141	142	169	-1	10	223	
170	143	144	170	-1	10	223	
171	145	146	171	-1	10	223	
172	147	148	172	-1	10	223	
173	149	150	173	-1	10	223	
174	151	152	174	-1	10	223	
175	153	154	175	-1	10	223	
176	155	156	176	-1	10	223	
177	157	158	177	-1	10	223	
178	159	160	178	-1	10	223	
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210	223	224	210	-1	10	223	
211	225	226	211	-1	10	223	
212	227	228	212	-1	10	223	
213	229	230	213	-1	10	223	
214	231	232	214	-1	10	223	
215	233	234	215	-1	10	223	
216	235	236	216	-1	10	223	
217	237	238	217	-1	10	223	
218	239	240	218	-1	10	223	
219	241	242	219	-1	10	223	</

The fourth dimension

If Channel 4 were really bold, it would hold a Jewish Christmas. In its search for alternative perspectives, it has come up with "Christmas in New York". "Black Christmas" and this year, "Beastly Christmas" — animal rights. So why ignore the obvious alternative? Not for lack of material, surely. Nor for lack of interested viewers. There are plenty of people, Jewish and otherwise, who do not mind celebrating the mid-winter solstice free from hymns to a virgin birth.

But Michael Grade, Channel 4's chief executive, is Jewish. So "Jews at Xmas" would look like special pleading, just as much as "Beastly Xmas" would be impossible if the chief executive were vegetarian. And Mr Grade happens to excel at special pleading. There have been few campaigns in broadcasting as high-profile as his for the abolition of the funding formula which has forced Channel 4 to pay £50 million or more a year to the ITV companies.

But within the intricate Broadcasting Bill published last week, one of the few clear things is that the loathed formula will remain. Only considerable parliamentary support for Channel 4 can abolish it now.

All the new Bill does is allow the possibility of altering the funding formula on a yearly basis. A share of any "excess" advertising revenue earned by Channel 4 will have to go to ITV companies, just as ITV will retain the theoretical duty to support the newer channel if advertising should run thin.

Last week the ITV companies issued a passionate, if

belated, public statement of their belief that neither their own channel nor Channel 4 can be sure of continuing to prosper when Channel 5 and digital television arrive. Almost at the same time, there has been a hurt and angry outcry from two ITV stalwarts that Channel 4 has gone too far to claim the high moral ground and disdain filthy commerce. Melvyn Bragg and Steve Morrison have accused Grade of crying quality while courting large audiences with cheap American imports.

Untrue, say Grade and



BRENDA MADDOX

John Willis, Channel 4's director of programmes. Each side throws statistics and programme names at the other to the point where, as Roger Bolton on Channel 4's *Right to Reply* moaned last week: "It's a nightmare to chair this discussion." He's right. It's no more possible to answer the question "Has Channel 4 lost its way?" than to prove that comedies aren't as funny as they used to be.

All I know is that Channel 4 is my choice when I switch on the set — and also that I switch it off faster than any of the others. It may not be showing enough original drama, but it certainly has

not lost its power to offend. With seven days to go to Christmas, it screened a stomach-churner on battery turkey farming on Monday.

But national debates about the remit of Channel 4 may soon seem as quaint as real coal fires and hand-mixed pastry. What the Broadcasting Bill clears the way for is the era of pay-TV: what most of those digital channels will be used for. If they catch on, the audience for ITV, let alone its oddball partner, may well shrivel.

The Bill, however, may overestimate the allure of digital television. Remember Prestel. Smell-o-vision and Videophone? Hyped to the rafters, they withered while technology and the consumer went off in another direction. Sensibly, the Bill recognises the reality of convergence of broadcasting and print, and removes many barriers to cross-ownership. Yet it is curiously old-fashioned in its preoccupation with complaints about decency and violence.

Among the statistics released last week was the real shocker: one-third of British homes have three or more television sets. Television, in other words, is increasingly a solitary experience. As new channels — foreign, pay and digital — enter the home, it will be harder and harder to police what any individual viewer of any age chooses to watch.

And harder to stop terrestrial channels from pushing the boundaries. Why pay for porn when you can see, as on Channel 4 last Saturday night at 9.50pm, Paula Yates entwined with a guest asking him whether he has ever had sex with a pig?



With the launch of a new perfume costing about £14 million, it is no surprise that Chanel is the only one of the top ten manufacturers in private hands

Profits that are heaven scent

The demand for new perfumes has sparked a high street price war. Alan Mitchell reports

Just look at those adverts: gorgeous, perfect specimens of the human body, draped in luxurious garb, photographed by the world's best, to produce spell-binding works of art. Then there are exotic names like Chanel, Calvin Klein, Dior's *Dolce Vita*, Estée Lauder's *Pleasure*, Lancôme's *Poème*, which conjure their own tantalising images.

In the run-up to Christmas, fragrance marketers deploy this fascinating concoction to

best effect, doing everything they can to catch the rush for the perfect present: the box of scintillations. It is a marketer's dream — a luxury gift purchased with clockwork regularity, fanatically loyal consumers who often choose a particular smell in their youth and stick with it, and profit margins to die for.

A fine fragrance may sell for £40 in the shop, but typically will only cost £4 to make. Another £8 might go in the packaging and another £10 on advertising and promotion, with the rest going to general running costs — and profit. Which leaves plenty of scope for image-making.

But for how much longer? Suddenly perfume is losing its luxury cachet and becoming an everyday purchase — and buyers are no longer showing brand loyalty. "Nowadays people are buying perfumes for themselves," says Angela Creasy, the perfume buyer for Harrods. And, in places like London, "all everyone wants is the next big thing".

Manufacturers are duly responding with new-product mania. The French perfume houses launched 100 new fragrances this year. Boots, Britain's biggest perfume distributor, estimates that a fifth of its sales are now accounted for by products less than a year old.

In the process, traditional fragrance-making is being turned on its head. In the old days, a freelance expert called a *nez* would spend months blending a concoction of 200 or more different herbs and

spices to come up with a new smell. It would then be taken up by a perfume house, given a name and a marketing concept and launched. Today, blockbusters like Dior's *Poison* are born first as a name and a marketing concept, and only then is the *nez* asked to come up with a brew that fits.

And such frenetic launch activity costs money. "The

risks and costs are very high," says Bernard Arnault, the chairman of Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy. "A perfume launch can cost £14 million" — which explains why there are so few family businesses left.

Arnault, for instance, heads the world biggest luxury conglomerate for whom historic names such as Dior, Givenchy, Guerlain and Christian Lacroix are just cogs in a huge brand portfolio.

Two of the top ten US and European perfumes, *Opium* and *L'Air du Temps*, come from the Yves Saint Laurent stable, whose ultimate owner is Elf Aquitaine, the French oil and pharmaceuticals giant. Another two, *Tresor* and *Cacharel's Anais Anais* (Britain's number one), come from L'Oréal, which is 49 per cent owned by Nestlé. Other L'Oréal brands include Armani, Ralph Lauren, Guy Laroche, Lanvin and Paloma Picasso.

Yet another two top European brands, Calvin Klein's

Eternity and *Sunflowers*, are part of the grocery giant Unilever's stable. Its subsidiary, Elida Gibbs, recently started marketing its products under the more upmarket name of Fabergé. Indeed, of the top ten sellers in Europe and America only one, Chanel, with its classic No 5, remains in private hands.

Meanwhile, the retailing

machines are moving in. Traditionally, perfume houses have sold their wares mainly through department stores, maintaining control over sales. In the last few years, however, Boots has introduced centralised warehousing, which gives it control of what it sells, and where. And in

stead of using manufacturers' merchandising and display materials, it creates its own. Ditto promotions.

Such activities have helped it to boost its market share. "This Christmas, one in four women in Britain will receive a bottle of fragrance bought for them at a Boots outlet," says David Kneale, its merchandising and marketing director. But in the process the perfume houses' image-makers are losing their grip on the market.

And, catching a whiff of huge margins and changing consumer attitudes, discounters are moving in. Three years ago, when Superdrug started selling fine fragrances at up to

a third off the normal price, the major perfume houses refused to supply its stores, arguing that the chain failed to meet the high standards of fixtures, fittings, ambience, and staff training expected of an outlet selling luxury products. A subsequent Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry backed the perfume houses' "selective distribution" policies. Suppliers need to be able to control their distribution in order to protect their brand images, it said.

But Superdrug insisted it was being unfairly discriminated against and continued to sell discounted perfumes, sourcing them from the so-called "grey" market. And, claims its business development director, Steven Round, "our pricing policy has changed the market".

Boots, a supporter of selective distribution, fears that too much discounting will kill fragrance as a luxury gift. Nevertheless, it is offering up to 30 per cent off a wide range of perfumes. Indeed, the perfume price wars may be only just beginning. Since the MMC report, Superdrug has persuaded Yves St Laurent to supply it direct. Now it hopes to persuade the other big houses to follow suit — but they will have to accept the chain's pricing policies.

If they don't, the drug store could well return to the regulatory fray. The European Union is committed to investigating the market in 1997. Says Mr Round: "We've put a huge effort into understanding the major perfume houses. If, after all this, they still turn us down, what more can we do?"

MEDIA, SALES & MARKETING

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COMPAQ

Casualties of Monty's war

Sixty agency journalists face losing their jobs in the new year, writes Roy Greenslade



David Montgomery: renegotiated the deal with PA

The ruthless nature of modern newspaper economics struck 60 young journalists with uncompromising force this week. They have been told that their jobs are in jeopardy just weeks after being hired by UK News, a news agency that was expected to become a major rival to the Press Association (PA).

UK News, which previously served only regional evening papers from its Leicester base, was encouraged to take on staff and open new offices so that it could provide a national service for two conglomerates, Mirror Group and Express Newspapers, which together publish ten national titles. Both groups announced in August that they were ending their contracts with PA after approaching UK News.

A deal was agreed and Alex Leys, Editor-in-Chief of UK News, set about the difficult task of finding competent staff, opening offices in London and Glasgow, and setting up the necessary technology to begin a news service from January 1 next year. PA, stung by the threat to its monopoly, quickly reduced the price of its own daily news service to other newspaper groups.

UK News was undaunted and emboldened by the fact that both the Express and Mirror Groups had taken 25 per cent stakes in its company along with two big regional

newspaper chains, Westminster Press, owned by Pearson, and Northcliffe, part of Associated Newspapers, which also owns the *Daily Mail*.

While Leys began recruiting his team, however, there were disagreements between the four shareholders. The boardroom wrangle began in September when Westminster Press, as part of a cost-cutting drive, pulled out. The three remaining groups could not agree on how to allocate the shares and Northcliffe eventually persuaded WP to return.

But that row, along with a squabble over the length of contracts, troubled Mirror Group's chief executive, David Montgomery. Unknown to

Mr Leys, he renegotiated a five-year deal with PA, taking advantage of its offer of reduced rates. The Express Group, which had championed the UK News initiative from the start, was forced to follow suit, agreeing a three-year contract with PA.

Northcliffe is known to be furious about the way in which Mr Leys was allowed to continue hiring and training staff while Montgomery was talking to PA. But Montgomery's principal concern had always been to reduce the expense of receiving agency news, and he achieved his ambition.

Some executives in other groups blame him for the

collapse of the project, arguing that it was all a cynical manoeuvre to force PA to cut its prices. That charge appears wide of the mark. He simply changed his mind.

Initial trials earlier this month by UK News were considered by the Express management to be better than expected. An angry Mr Leys emphasises that his journalists performed well. "They are a superb team who met the challenge of providing a national service and what has happened is their fault at all," he says. "I greatly regret the decision of the Mirror and Express to pull out. We are now doing all we can to rescue the situation. Of course, if that rescue proves impossible then there could be job losses. We'll know in the next ten days."

One UK News reporter, who asked to remain anonymous, said: "We all thought the deal was signed, sealed and delivered. We didn't imagine we were taking jobs without a proper agreement being in place. Some of the staff who have moved to London from as far away as Newcastle have even sold their houses."

Jon Slatery, who resigned as deputy editor of the *UK Press Gazette*, the trade magazine, to become the agency's business and media correspondent, has been advised not to start at UK News and has returned to his former job on contract. He says: "My heart goes out to those who have taken leases on flats in London. They could be out of work before the end of the year."

One question yet to be resolved is which company will fund redundancy payments. Irrespective of the legal situation, Northcliffe believes the Mirror and Express are morally obliged to pay up.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Despite the slump and sick building scares, the air conditioning business is set for growth, Rodney Hobson reports

Keen wind sharpens fresh-air industry

A chill breeze is blowing in the air conditioning industry. Although only a tiny proportion of commercial buildings in this country have air conditioning, competition is intense and margins have been squeezed.

Roger Williamson, marketing manager of Liebert Europe, explains: "There was a spate of building with air conditioning fitted, particularly in the City of London where you couldn't open windows, but there was also a lot of speculative building in the 1980s where proper services were not installed."

"Air conditioning got a bad press with talk about sick building syndrome and many property developers decided to leave the question of air conditioning to the tenant. They argued that air conditioning added cost to a building and it may not meet the requirements of the occupier."

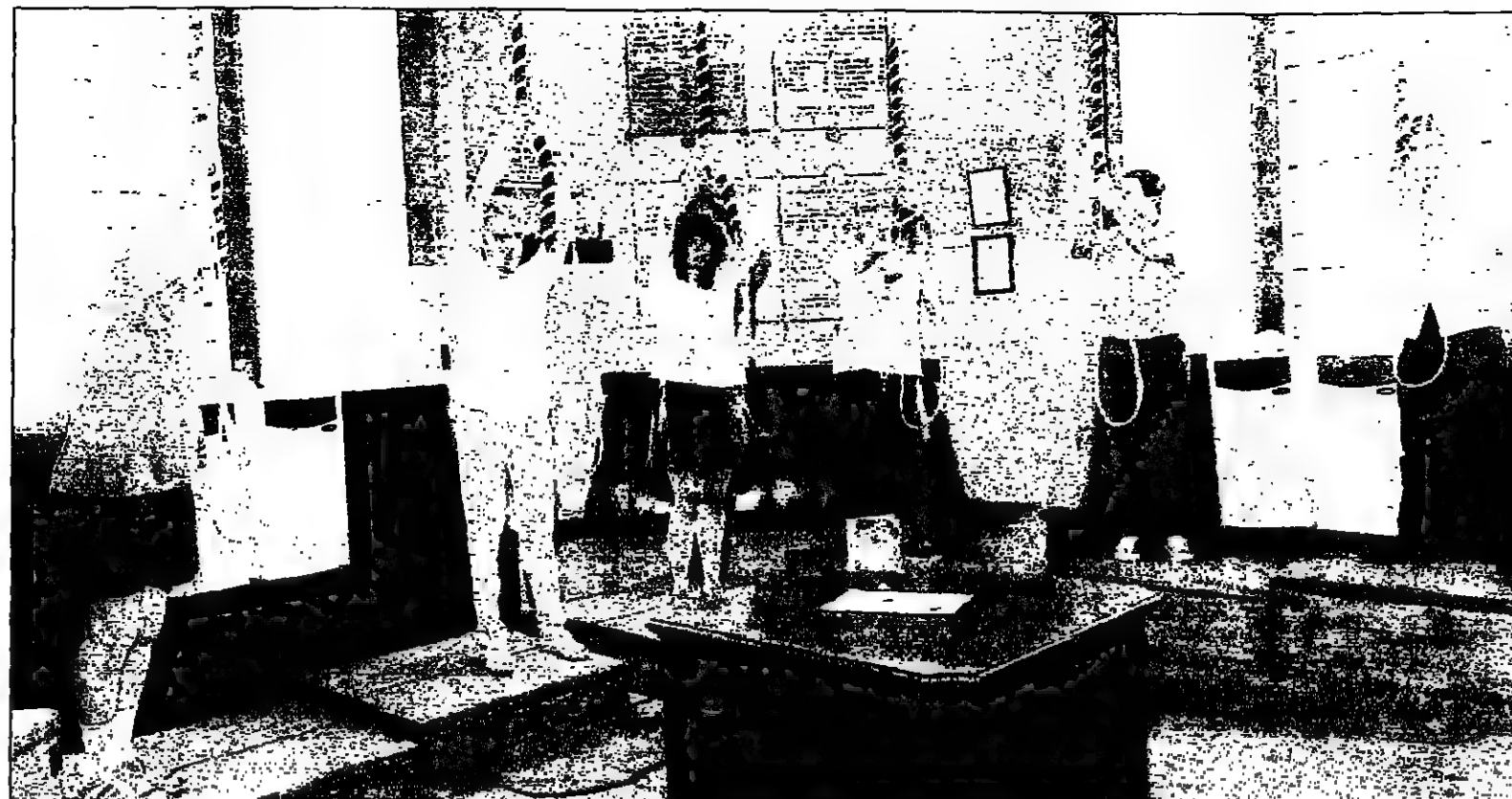
Consultants, in particular, have found the going tough. Richard Wilkins, divisional director at Symonds, says: "Because of compulsory competitive tendering and the general economic climate, professional fees have been pushed down. Our profession

used to quote a set scale of fees which were accepted by the client. The market has become so competitive that if you quoted those fees now you would be laughed out of the room. The client would say halve it and then see what you can shave off."

Mr Williamson agrees: "Building services are fiercely competitive. We export to Eastern Europe and Russia. If we were entirely dependent on the home market we would have been squeezed. The market here is flat and, if anything, in decline."

Mr Wilkins says that "design consultants are trying to provide a Rolls-Royce service for a Ford Fiesta budget". Consultants, he says, sometimes accept work at a lower price as a loss leader. This sets a dangerous precedent as clients expect repeat work at the same price.

He says: "Maintenance contractors are operating in a price-driven system that knows the cost of everything and the value of very little." So clients know what they are paying but are less concerned about getting what they really need. The outcome is that all too often lawyers are called in when the air conditioning does



Hot work: the bell-ringers in St Paul's Cathedral were kept cool this summer thanks to the installation of a portable air-conditioning system

not meet the client's expected standards of comfort or the machinery becomes faulty.

Mr Williamson is currently involved as an expert witness in a case involving a £12 million claim and sometimes feels he could make a more lucrative living as a full-time expert witness. Mr Wilkins sees improvements flowing from designers and consultants sitting round a table, even if that adds to the initial bill.

He says: "Once we had negotiations. It made more sense than litigation later. We defined a clear client brief and we talked about what they were and

were not getting. Now there is very little access to the client."

Despite the tough conditions, many in the air conditioning industry see a more promising end to the century. Mitsubishi Electric, for instance, is doubling the production space at its factory at Livingston, near Edinburgh. It estimates its turnover at £22 million this year and confidently expects the figure to rise to £30 million next year.

Vic Brown, general manager, says about 6 per cent of UK office space is air conditioned, a figure he expects to rise to 30 per cent over the next ten years. He says: "This means that air conditioning will be one of the most vibrant markets in the building sector."

Appeal for a draught

THE HOT summer had the bell-ringers at St Paul's Cathedral sending for portable air conditioners. To mark Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's 95th birthday on August 4 and the 50th anniversary of VJ-Day on August 15, teams of 12 ringers attempted full peals, ringing continuously for four hours. The desired temperature for ringing the bells is 70 degrees.

Installed in 1878 and weighing more than 13 tons, the 12 bells located in the northwest tower form one of the heaviest peals in the world. The tenor bell alone weighs more than three tons.

Four Ecodesign units, supplied by the air-conditioning specialists Carrier, counteracted rising temperatures and high levels of humidity. The portable air conditioners had to be quiet enough to allow the ringers to hear the

bells clearly from the ringing room 20 feet up. Paul Mounsey, guild master, commented: "Bell-ringing is not for the faint hearted and the full peal is our marathon, requiring intense concentration to maintain the correct tempo. In the past we have suffered from the oppressive temperature and humidity conditions."

In the City, whichever company moves into the NatWest Tower will have the benefits of a new air conditioning system. The improvement is part of the major refurbishment programme after the devastation of the IRA bomb in April 1993. The NatWest bank itself, however, will not enjoy the comfort. It announced this month that its staff have been relocated and will not return to the tower. The new air conditioning will be installed by Carrier,

which has already put systems into four of London's tallest buildings. The five buildings have a combined height of nearly 2,500 ft and cover 180 floors. Each chiller at the NatWest Tower will weigh nearly 30 tons and will come in four sections to be assembled on site.

Euston Tower and the newly-listed Centrepoint have had their 1960s air conditioning overhauled during the past two years. At Euston Tower a lift had to be dismantled so that the two-ton, ten-foot long evaporators could be hoisted up the lift shaft.

Using a lift shaft was not possible at Centrepoint so a hoist in a steel framework was built running 550 feet up the outside of the building. The 244-metre tower at Canary Wharf produced one of the largest orders for chillers ever placed in the UK.

Confusion still reigns

HOPES that Spain would use its tenure of the European presidency to clear up the vexed and complex issue of Tüpe — the transfer of undertakings, protection of employment regulations — have come to naught.

Tüpe regulations were designed to prevent wholesale sackings and the worsening of working conditions in company takeovers. The British rules were based on the EU's Acquired Rights Directive. Tribunal rulings and court cases in Britain and other European countries have extended the scope of the directive to cover the outsourcing of public sector functions.

A revised draft of the European Union's directive is still being debated after 18 months. Critics say the directive and subsequent court and tribunal rulings have left the providers of business services in a fog of uncertainty.

Meanwhile, contractors engaged in competitive tendering for the provision of local authority services are assuming that the Tüpe regulations apply to practically all contracts and will have to take on all existing staff on their current terms of employment.

● **ATLAS WRIGHT**, the Leeds-based air-conditioning and building services group, has been bought out by its management team.

● **BRITISH RAIL**, Railtrack, AEA Technology and IBM are sponsoring the Association of Project Managers annual awards to be presented at the association's annual dinner at the Savoy Hotel on March 14.

● **PCL** has been awarded a £1.8 million contract to manage the mainframe computer of Thomson Directories. The operation will move from Thomson's computer facility at Farnborough, Hampshire, to PCL's data centre at Croyley Green, Hertfordshire.

● **THE** facilities maintenance contract for the Marks & Spencer headquarters in Baker Street, London, has been awarded to How Group's MTM.

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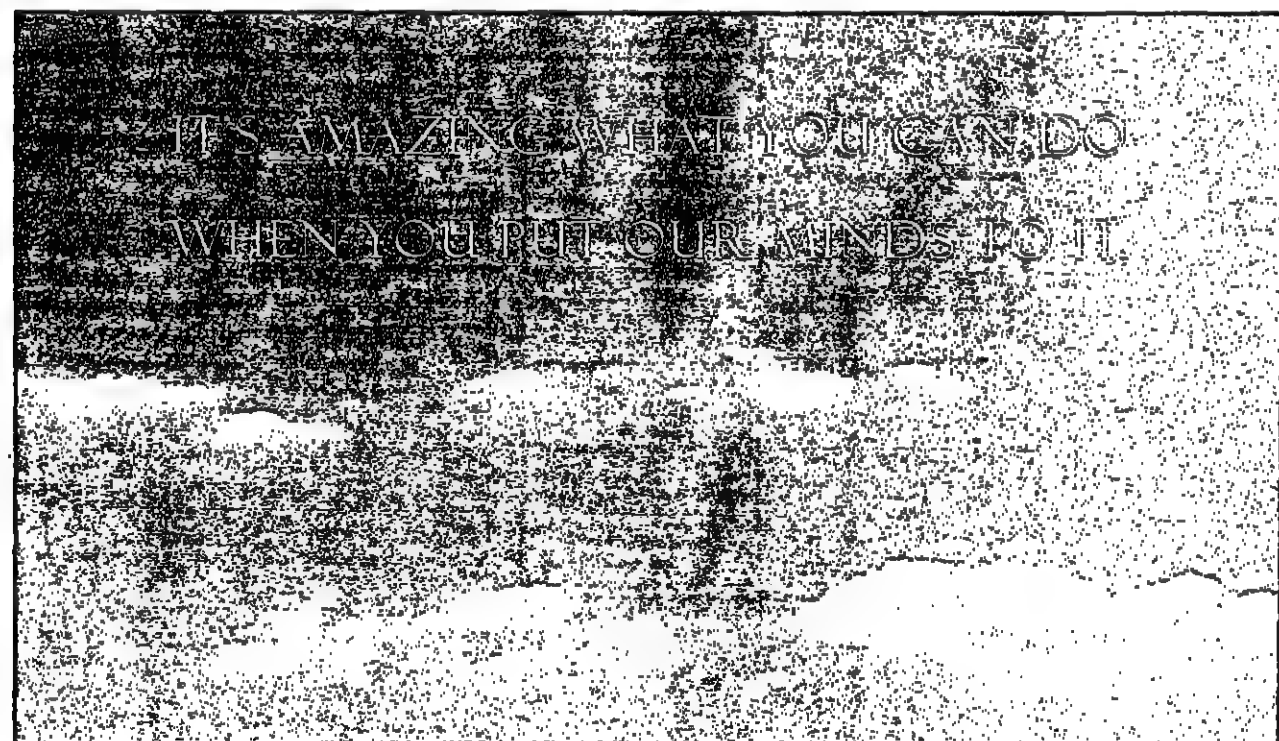
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The monthly Facilities Management section is now well established and recognised within the market place, and has become essential reading for anyone wishing to keep abreast of industry news, developments and initiatives. Since 1992 The Times has been the only National Newspaper to regularly devote an entire section to Facilities Management.

The Times will be producing a tabloid sized supplement in March 1996 in association with Blenheim Events to coincide with F.M. Expo 96. During 1996 The Times will become increasingly involved in F.M. Exhibitions and Conferences throughout the country, this reflects our support to the industry.

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PROPERTY AROUND BRITAIN — SPOT THE ONLY REGION TO SHOW A PRICE RISE

■ Yolande Barnes, head of residential research at Savills: "We have now seen the full extent of the 'bounce back' in prime central

London property values that we predicted in 1992. Values are now 33 per cent higher than they were in 1992 and are broadly back to their long-term trend. At the end of 1994 we were predicting that prices in central London would grow at 10 per cent as we thought the momentum would keep growing. However, we revised that figure to 2 per cent in June. This revised figure now looks set to be attained.

As for others, the most accurate forecasters for their sectors proved to be the House Builders' Federation and Knight Frank & Rutley on country houses. Their views and those of other experts are set out here.

REGIONAL CHANGES IN HOUSE PRICES

Third quarter 1995

Region	Average Price	QoQ Change	Annual Change
Scotland	£57,458	+1.4%	-1.4%
Northern Ireland	£45,250	+2.2%	+3.1%
North West	£52,415	-2.4%	-5.3%
Wales	£50,283	-0.3%	-4.4%
West Midlands	£81,037	0.6%	-1.8%
South West	£61,323	-0.2%	-2.2%
South East	£77,299	-0.9%	-0.8%
G. London	£77,613	-7.5%	-1.2%
East Anglia	£58,589	0.6%	-2.1%
East Midlands	£53,041	-3.8%	-3.8%
Yorkshire & Humber	£50,535	-3.0%	-3.0%
North	£48,714	-3.2%	-4.7%
UK	£61,499	+0.7%	+2.6%

Standardised house prices are derived from the Halifax's large number of mortgage approvals. Figures are weighted to take account of changes in the mix of houses.

Source: Halifax

This is because interest rates have been quite high. At the moment, real interest rates are around 5 per cent and the economy is slowing. My view is that 1996 will show very modest growth and house prices will increase by about 3 per cent. Of course there is no such thing as a single housing market any more. In London at the top end of the market there is a shortage of English family houses: in places like Kensington, so house prices there should outperform my estimate. Short leases will underperform my estimate. The bottom end of the market is going to remain pretty dull."


Additional research by
Leyla Linton

cent this year. At the beginning of 1995 we went through a sticky patch of confidence led by predictions of falling house prices. Thirty-year-olds, the original first-time buyers, have been renting but they were ill-advised: buying is still cheaper. In 1996 the capital value of your house will appreciate by more than the cost of your mortgage, and house prices will increase by 8 per cent in London."

■ **Rupert Sweeting of Knight Frank & Rutley:** "We said in 1994 that country house prices would rise steadily by 5 per cent by the spring and they did. Since the summer the market has appeared to lose some of its fizz and buyers are now tending to be more cautious. Perhaps this has some-


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Power to hear second complaint

Marley UK Ltd and Another v Anderson

Before Lord Justice Russell, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment December 13]

An industrial tribunal which had rejected an employee's complaint of unfair dismissal, on the ground that it was made more than three months after the dismissal but not within a reasonable time, was empowered to hear a second complaint on the same dismissal on a different ground which the employee had subsequently discovered.

The moment at which the employee first developed a belief in the right to claim unfair dismissal, on any grounds, did not fix, for all time and for all purposes, the time at which the employee was to be treated as having discovered the grounds for complaint.

The Court of Appeal so held in dismissing an appeal by the employers, Marley UK Ltd and Marley Floors Ltd, against a decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal (Mr Justice Mummery, Mrs M. L. Boyle and Mr J. A. Scoullar) (*The Times* December 16, 1995) (1995) ICR 295 that the industrial tribunal was entitled, notwithstanding its finding that a first set of facts had caused the employee, Stuart Anderson, to believe he had grounds for a complaint, to regard a second set of facts as a further ground for presenting a complaint and to conclude that it was not reasonably practicable to present a complaint on that ground before the end of a period of three months after the dismissal.

Section 67 of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 provides: "(1) A complaint may be presented to an industrial tribunal against an employer by any person ... that he was unfairly dismissed

by the employer. (2) ... an industrial tribunal shall not consider a complaint under this section unless it is presented to the tribunal before the end of the period of three months beginning with the effective date of termination or within such further period as the tribunal considers that it is reasonable in a case where it is satisfied that it was not reasonably practicable for the complaint to be presented before the end of the period of three months."

Mr David Richardson for the employers, Mr John Bowers for the employee.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that the employee's first ground of complaint had been unfair dismissal, on any grounds, did not fix, for all time and for all purposes, the time at which the employee was to be treated as having discovered the grounds for complaint.

The two grounds both relied on different facts but in both cases the facts relied on were unknown to the employee until after the expiry of the three-month time limit from the date of dismissal.

The first ground had originally been raised as a single ground in the originating application which the employee presented more than three months after the date of dismissal. The second ground was raised by subsequent amendment to the same application.

Because both grounds had been raised outside the three-month time limit imposed by section 67(2) of the 1978 Act, it became necessary for the tribunal to rule, as a preliminary issue, on whether it had jurisdiction to entertain the complaint.

In the case of the first ground, the industrial tribunal ruled that it had not been practicable for the employee to present his complaint within time because the employee had not become aware of the facts upon which it was founded within the three months; but nevertheless held that it had no jurisdiction to entertain the complaint so far as it depended on that ground, because the employee or his advisers had delayed unreasonably in issuing the originating application.

In the case of the second ground

of complaint the industrial tribunal made a similar finding that the employee had not become aware of the facts upon which it was founded until a date which made it impracticable to present the complaint within time, but in that instance held that it had jurisdiction to entertain the complaint because the employee had raised reasonably quickly after acquiring the relevant knowledge.

The employers had argued before the Employment Appeal Tribunal that time began to run against the employee for all purposes once he became aware of one set of facts providing grounds for an unfair dismissal complaint. That contention had been rejected by the appeal tribunal.

The issue was whether industrial tribunals were bound, when applying section 67(2) of the 1978 Act, to regard the moment at which the employee first developed a belief in the right to claim unfair dismissal, on any grounds, as fixing, for all time and for all purposes, the time at which the employee was to be treated as having discovered the grounds for complaint.

Another way of expressing the same question was whether issues of reasonable practicability under section 67(2) depended on awareness of a right to complain at all, or upon awareness of specific grounds for complaint.

Mr Anderson was information technology manager with Marley Floors Ltd. He was made redundant on November 15, 1994. On March 18 or 19, 1995, he had discovered from a former colleague that the company had merged with another in the Marley group and that another employee had been appointed information technology manager in the merged group. Mr Anderson had presented a complaint on April 24, 1995 that his dismissal was not a genuine redundancy or that he had been unfairly selected for redundancy.

In October 1992, Mr Anderson

had obtained a copy of a memorandum written in June 1991 criticising his performance. He had not previously been told there was any criticism of his performance. On November 9, 1992, he had amended his originating application to contend that if the true reason for his dismissal was conduct or capability it was both procedurally and substantively unfair.

The nature of the employment relationship was such that employees would normally have a greater knowledge of the reasons for their particular circumstances giving rise to a dismissal.

A disadvantage of the tribunals' informal procedure for pleadings and discovery was that information necessary to enable an employee to know and understand the full circumstances of, and motives for, his dismissal might emerge only slowly and gradually.

As the picture emerged, the employee ought to be allowed the maximum opportunity of adding to or changing his grounds of complaint. There was no principle of justice or fairness which would justify restraining the employee from proceeding on a second ground of complaint, raised within a period found by the tribunal to be reasonable.

If employees wished to protect themselves against late claims on the basis of newly discovered information, they would see to it that the fullest information was given to the employer at the time of dismissal so that if proceedings followed their discovery was open-handed.

Mr Richardson had submitted on the basis of passages in *Machin v Stewarts & Lloyds* (1988) ICR 380, that it was now settled law that industrial tribunals must regard the moment at which the employee first developed a belief in a right to claim unfair dismissal on some ground as fixing for all time the moment of discovery of the facts.

Those passages however should not be construed as if they were statutes. They did not restrict the proposition which his Lordship, in common with the Employment Appeal Tribunal, believed to be the law, that the question posed by section 67(2), namely, the practicability of presentation within time and the reasonableness of any subsequent period elapsed before presentation, were both matters to be weighed separately, ground by ground and fact by fact, under each head of unfair dismissal upon which a complaint or complaints was or were founded.

Lord Justice Russell and Lord Justice Schiemann agreed.

Solicitors: Argles & Court, Maidstone; Harman & Harman, Canterbury.

Sanction for false statement

Regina v Page

Before Lord Justice Kennedy, Mr Justice Judge and Mr Justice Clarke

[Judgment December 14]

A false statement made to a trading standards officer during an interview under caution was a statement to which criminal sanctions applied.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division, so held in dismissing an appeal by Philip Charles Page against his conviction in February 1995 at Isleworth Crown Court (Judge Meier), on a plea of guilty after a ruling by the trial judge, to three counts of making a false statement to a trading standards officer contrary to section 29(2) of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 for which he was fined £200, with seven days imprisonment in default, on each count and ordered to pay £400 prosecution costs.

Section 29 of the 1968 Act provides: "(1) Any person who ... (c) without reasonable cause fails to give [a trading standards officer] ... any other assistance or information which he may reasonably require of him for the purpose of the performance of his functions under this Act, shall be guilty of an offence."

(2) If any person, in giving such

information as is mentioned in the preceding subsection, makes any statement which he knows to be false, he shall be guilty of an offence."

Mr Julian Christopher, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the appellant, Mr Simon Blackford for the prosecution.

LORD JUSTICE KENNEDY, giving the judgment of the court, said that the appellant was a self-employed dealer in vehicles. He was involved in buying second-hand cars for a friend, the co-defendant, who altered the odometer readings before re-selling the cars.

When the appellant was interviewed, under caution, by a trading standards officer he made statements which he knew to be false, and he was charged with three offences under section 29(2) of the 1968 Act.

Before the trial judge Mr Christopher submitted that section 29(2) did not cover information provided in an interview under caution because the word "require" in section 29(1)(c) had a mandatory element and the offence in section 29(2) could only be committed in a situation where the interviewee was bound to answer the question.

Ex hypothesi, if the interviewee

had been told, in the words of the caution, that he did not need to answer the question, then the situation was not one which fell within the scope of section 29(1)(c). The trial judge ruled against the submission and the appellant changed his plea to one of guilty.

Mr Christopher repeated his submission before their Lordships who felt unable to read the section in that way.

If one looked first at section 29(2), a person giving information which he knew to be false, and that situation was one which, on the facts of the case, fell within the scope of section 29(1)(c).

It arose because information was being sought which the officer reasonably required of the interviewee for the purpose of the performance of the officer's functions under the Act.

The interviewee did not have to answer the officer's questions because he had been cautioned, and if he declined to answer then he would not have been guilty of any offence under section 29(1)(c) since that section opened with the words "without reasonable cause". He would have had a reasonable cause for failing to give information because he had been cautioned and told that he need not give it.

However, if he had chosen to

give information which was false he put himself plainly within the scope of section 29(2).

Any other construction would lead to absurdity because, if Mr Christopher's construction was correct, up to the moment of caution, if the interviewee gave information which was false, he was liable to be prosecuted under section 29(2).

However, once the formality of caution had been gone through he could then give not merely no information but false information with impunity and that, it seemed to their Lordships, could not have been what the Act intended.

In other statutory provisions in the Act, the verb "require" undoubtedly envisaged the person in respect of whom the requirement was made doing something which he had no option but to do, but that was plainly not the situation which arose in section 29(1) and (2) for the reasons outlined above.

"Require" was an ordinary English word and could be used in different contexts and plainly it was used in different ways in different sections of the 1968 Act. The judge was right in the ruling he gave and accordingly there was no substance in this appeal.

Solicitors: Mr David Over, Reading.

Hospital blood sample request

Webber v Director of Public Prosecutions

Before Lord Justice Schiemann and Mr Justice Holland

[Judgment December 4]

A requirement lawfully made of a patient at a hospital for the provision of a blood sample under section 9(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 was not varied or discharged by the fact that the patient left the hospital before she could comply.

It remained valid when the discharged patient was subsequently arrested under section 6 of the Act and taken to a police station where a breath analysis machine was available.

There was nothing in the statute to say that the locus was so vital that the specimen had to be provided in the hospital.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so stated when dismissing an appeal by Penelope Webber by way of case stated against the dismissal of her appeal at Kingston Crown Court (Judge MacRae and Justices) on April 4, 1995 against her conviction by Wimbledon Justices on December 8, 1994 of driving with excess alcohol contrary to section 5(1)(a) of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Section 9 of the 1988 Act provides:

"(1) While a person is at hospital

as a patient he shall not be required to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test or to provide a specimen for a laboratory test unless the medical practitioner in immediate charge of his case has been notified of the proposal to make the requirement; and—(a) if the requirement is then made, it shall be for the provision of a specimen at the hospital."

Mr Keith Hadrell for Ms Webber, Mr John McGuinness for the prosecution.

MR JUSTICE HOLLAND said that following a car accident Ms Webber was taken to hospital. While still a patient she refused to give a breath specimen.

She was therefore required to give a blood sample subject to the provisions of sections 7(1)(b) and 9(1) of the 1988 Act but before she was able to comply she was discharged.

As she was no longer a patient, she was subsequently arrested for her earlier failure to provide a specimen. At the police station she provided a blood specimen and was charged.

Mr Hadrell submitted that upon discharge from hospital Ms Webber was similarly discharged from the obligation to comply with

the lawful requirement to provide blood.

The obligation started at the time of section 7(1)(a) of the 1988 Act, necessitating provision of breath specimens through the use of a breath analysis machine which was available at the police station.

Since the police did not adopt that course, the blood specimen actually provided was not supplied in response to any lawful requirement and therefore could not found the conviction. Mr Hadrell drew the court's attention to the words of section 9(1)(a) saying that the requirement "shall be for the provision of a specimen at the hospital".

Given that the lawful requirement had to be on those terms, he submitted, it could only be satisfied by provision at the hospital. Reliance was also placed on *Passon v Nicholson* (1981) RTR 431, 429(4) and *Whelan v DPP* (unreported, June 28, 1994, DC).

Mr McGuinness submitted that the fact found by the justices, that the requirement by the police officer for the provision of a blood specimen was lawful, set in train a procedure backed up by the sanction of section 7(1) of the 1988 Act.

Once set in train that course could not be discharged by an irrelevant change of locus. As long as the section 9(1)(a) procedure was

started in hospital and not abandoned, it continued after the patient left hospital.

Only if an officer, following discharge from hospital, set in train the section 7(1)(a) procedure, making it abundantly plain that the procedure previously in course was no longer in course, could there be an abrogation. In the present case there was no such indication.

In his Lordship's judgment, those submissions were to be preferred. In particular, the officer had set in train the procedure by virtue of a lawful requirement.

That procedure had a sanction provided and it was not varied or discharged by the mere fact that Ms Webber left hospital before she could comply. There was nothing in the Act which said that locus was so vital that the specimen had to be provided in hospital.

The court respectfully could not agree with the Divisional Court in *Whelan*, where the point was not fully argued and the observations of Mr Justice Buxton were obiter dicta. The appeal would be dismissed.

Lord Justice Schiemann agreed.

Solicitors: Kidd McLaverty & Co, Kingston upon Thames; Crown Prosecution Service, Headquarters.

Restricting satellite litigation

Oliver and Another v McKenna & Co (a Firm)

Before Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment December 13]

A plaintiff could only sue his advisers for negligently putting, or omitting to put, evidence before the court, which had led to the court making an order with which he was dissatisfied if the inclusion, or exclusion, of such evidence had the effect of entirely changing the aspect of the case.

Mr Justice Laddie so held in the Chancery Division, on November 30 in dismissing an action for

negligence brought by Laurence Edward Oliver and Design Associates (Engineering) Ltd against McKenna & Co, a firm of solicitors, for, inter alia, their recommendation of a particular incorporated involuntary practitioner which led to his appointment by Mr Justice Harman, on February 1, 1988, as the receiver of partnership between the first plaintiff and his son.

HIS LORDSHIP said that the purpose behind cases like *Hunter v Chief Constable of the West*

Middlelands Police (1982) AC 529 and *Somasondaram v M. Julius Melchior & Co* (1988) 1 WLR 1944 was to restrict to a minimum satellite litigation, the purpose or major effect of which would be to undermine in one court the considered decision of another court on the same issue.

In the instant case, the question was whether Mr Justice Harman's decision to appoint the receiver was correct, not whether subsequent events could have justified the court in removing him.

tribunal was inequitable given his specific needs and severe disabilities.

The present action was made on a claim that the letter of July 20, 1979 was written in breach of a duty owed to him by Mr Whelan. Mr Whelan had devoted breach of duty and pleaded limitation. The defence relied on documents and letters passing between the plaintiff and his former solicitors, Mannheim & Ott, in 1983. The plaintiff claimed in reply that he did not and could not with due diligence have discovered the relevant facts until April 1985.

The plaintiff had engaged in other litigation using various firms of solicitors and it was in connection with those proceedings that the documents sought by the defence had come into existence.

Those were undoubtedly privileged documents. The fact that the action for which they had been brought into existence was concluded was immaterial: *Calcraft v Gress* (1898) 1 QB 759. The issue was whether the privilege had been waived in respect of documents going to the issues in the present case.

The principal issue in the present case was deliberate concealment and the plaintiff's date of knowledge of the letter of July 20, 1979 was the date of his knowledge of the letter. In his Lordship's judgment, the files of the plaintiff's former solicitors in the hands of his present solicitors were subject to the same rules of discovery as the file of his present solicitors. There was no logical basis for distinguishing between those files and those of the plaintiff's present solicitors were dealing with essentially the same subject matter.

Solicitors: Widdows Willey Hargrave, Leeds; H. P. T. Gough & Co, Whitehaven.

Former client waived legal privilege

Kershaw v Whelan

Before Mrs Justice Ebsworth

[Judgment October 12]

A solicitor who was sued by a former client was entitled to discovery and inspection of privileged documents in the files of solicitors previously acting for the plaintiff, which related to separate proceedings and which included notes of advice given by solicitors and opinions and advice of counsel.

By bringing civil proceedings against his solicitor the plaintiff impliedly waived legal professional privilege in respect of all relevant matters, including files of his other earlier solicitors held by his present solicitors.

Mrs Justice Ebsworth so held giving judgment in open court after a hearing in chambers in Liverpool of an interlocutory application for discovery by the defendant, Alan Whelan, in proceedings for breach of trust.

bread of contract or negligence brought by Ian Kershaw.

Mr Nicholas Davidson, QC, for the defendant; Mr Ian Leeming, QC, for the plaintiff.

MRS JUSTICE EBSWORTH said the plaintiff was severely disabled, being spastic and almost blind. His father had died in April 1979 and in accordance with the wishes of his father's widow he transferred the family home to the trustees' absolute discretion. The trustees had consulted the defendant, whose reply by letter of June 20, 1979 was a factor influencing the trustees to award the widow £39,041 and the plaintiff and his sister £5,336 apiece. The plaintiff contended that this dis-

tribution was inequitable given his specific needs and severe disabilities.

The present action was made on a claim that the letter of July 20, 1979 was written in breach of a duty owed to him by Mr Whelan. Mr Whelan had devoted breach of duty and pleaded limitation. The defence relied on documents and letters passing between the plaintiff and his former solicitors, Mannheim & Ott, in 1983. The plaintiff claimed in reply that he did not and could not with due diligence have discovered the relevant facts until April 1985.

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Solicitors: Widdows Willey Hargrave, Leeds; H. P. T. Gough & Co, Whitehaven.

Right to oral hearing over dispute

Regina v Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Ex parte Dickson

Before Mr Justice Carnwath

[Judgment December 5]

Where there was a dispute about the character of an applicant for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 1990 (Crd 2434) that was not a dispute about the conclusions under paragraph 24(c) of the scheme so that he would be entitled to an oral hearing.

Mr Justice Carnwath, sitting as additional judge of the Queen's Bench Division, so held when upholding the application of Richard Dickson for certiorari to quash the refusal by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board on January 19, 1992 of his application for an oral hearing of his claim for compensation for assault and robbery after that claim was rejected on the ground of his own criminality.

Paragraph 24 of the 1990 Scheme provides: "An applicant will be entitled to an oral hearing only if ... (c) no award or a reduced award was made and there is a dispute as to the material facts or conclusions upon which the initial or reconsidered decision was based or it appears that the decision may have been wrong in law or principle."

Mr David A. Blake for the applicant; Mr Michael Kent for the board.

MR JUSTICE CARNWATH said that the issue was whether, having regard to the correct interpretation of paragraph 24(c) the board could reasonably have refused an oral hearing.

The applicant contended that "conclusion" in paragraph 24(c) meant any conclusion drawn from the facts including the conclusion

as to the extent to which the award should be affected by a previous conviction.

His Lordship accepted that there was no reason to adopt an artificial restriction on the ordinary meaning of the word, particularly in a context where discretion was being used as a reason to deprive someone of compensation which was otherwise due.

The language in paragraph 24(c) was not therefore confined to just raw facts, but also to the conclusions which were to be drawn from those facts, and also value judgments as to significance and weight, in reaching a final evaluation.

It was not necessary to attempt an all-embracing definition but the points that might be covered included the genuineness of attempts made by the defendant to reform himself and the seriousness of the crime and the weight to be given to a series of less serious crimes.

All those were matters on which an oral hearing could be important to put the bare record in context. All the applicant could do was put his side of the story and his assessment of the convictions.

In doing so he was implicitly putting in issue the evaluation at first instance of those convictions; in other words he was disputing the conclusions on which the decision was based.

The board's decision was understandable if it thought that it was concerned solely with disputes of fact or inferences of fact, but not if the paragraph had the wider meaning which his Lordship considered it bore. It was not a decision which it could reasonably have made. The application succeeded and the decision would be quashed.

Solicitors: Miss Angela Harding, Wythenshawe; Treasury Solicitor.

Former client waived legal privilege

Kershaw v Whelan

Before Mrs Justice Ebsworth

[Judgment October 12]

A solicitor who was sued by a former client was entitled to discovery and inspection of privileged documents in the files of solicitors previously acting for the plaintiff, which related to separate proceedings and which included notes of advice given by solicitors and opinions and advice of counsel.

By bringing civil proceedings against his solicitor the plaintiff impliedly waived legal professional privilege in respect of all relevant matters, including files of his other earlier solicitors held by his present solicitors.

Mrs Justice Ebsworth so held giving judgment in open court after a hearing in chambers in Liverpool of an interlocutory application for discovery by the defendant, Alan Whelan, in proceedings for breach of trust.

bread of contract or negligence brought by Ian Kershaw.

Mr Nicholas Davidson, QC, for the defendant; Mr Ian Leeming, QC, for the plaintiff.

MRS JUSTICE EBSWORTH said the plaintiff was severely disabled, being spastic and almost blind. His father had died in April 1979 and in accordance with the wishes of his father's widow he transferred the family home to the trustees' absolute discretion. The trustees had consulted the defendant, whose reply by letter of June 20, 1979 was a factor influencing the trustees to award the widow £39,041 and the plaintiff and his sister £5,336 apiece. The plaintiff contended that this dis-

tribution was inequitable given his specific needs and severe disabilities.

The present action was made on a claim that the letter of July 20, 1979 was written in breach of a duty owed to him by Mr Whelan. Mr Whelan had devoted breach of duty and pleaded limitation. The defence relied on documents and letters passing between the plaintiff and his former solicitors, Mannheim & Ott, in 1983. The plaintiff claimed in reply that he did not and could not with due diligence have discovered the relevant facts until April 1985.

The plaintiff had engaged in other litigation using various firms of solicitors and it was in connection with those proceedings that the documents sought by the defence had come into existence.

Those were undoubtedly privileged documents. The fact that the action for which they had been brought into existence was concluded was immaterial: *Calcraft v Gress* (1898) 1 QB 759. The issue was whether the privilege had been waived in respect of documents going to the issues in the present case.

The principal issue in the present case was deliberate concealment and the plaintiff's date of knowledge of the letter of July 20, 1979 was the date of his knowledge of the letter. In his Lordship's judgment, the files of the plaintiff's former solicitors in the hands of his present solicitors were subject to the same rules of discovery as the file of his present solicitors. There was no logical basis for distinguishing between those files and those of the plaintiff's present solicitors were dealing with essentially the same subject matter.

Solicitors: Widdows Willey Hargrave, Leeds; H. P. T. Gough & Co, Whitehaven.

Limit to right of legal self-help

Co-Operative Wholesale Society Ltd v British Railways Board

Before Lord Justice Beldam, Lord Justice Hobhouse and Lord Justice Aldous

[Judgment December 18]

The right of abatement should be confined to cases where the security of lives or property requires immediate and speedy action and where such action could be exercised simply without recourse to the expense and inconvenience of legal proceedings in circumstances unlikely to give rise to argument or dispute. Where a simple and speedy application to a court could be made, the remedy of self-help was neither appropriate nor desirable.

The Court of Appeal so stated in a reserved judgment allowing in part an appeal by the British Railways Board from a judgment on March 21, 1995 by Judge Briggs in the Chancery Division awarding the Co-Operative Wholesale Society the sum of £6,050, the cost of demolishing and

rebuilding part of a wall, on the property of the defendants.

Mr Piers Hill for the BR board; Mr Martin Lindsay for CWS.

LORD JUSTICE BELDAM said that the wall on BR's land had started to bulge over part of its section and to lean over the land belonging to CWS.

A BR representative did not agree that it was dangerous but stated that if CWS wanted to carry out repairs he was willing for them to do so but at their expense. CWS demolished the wall and rebuilt it and claimed the cost from BR who refused to pay.

Mr Hill had accepted the judge's finding that the wall was a nuisance but had argued that he was wrong to hold that BR were responsible either for the cost of demolition or for rebuilding. He said that the law had always set its face against self-help unless recovery in such remedies was unavailable.

He referred to *Clerk and Lindell on Tort* (17th edition, p1549) where under the rubric of "Abatement of nuisances" the au-

thors said: "The right to abate a nuisance has fallen into a certain amount of judicial disfavour and various limitations have been put up in judgments which suggest the creation of further limitations in future."

After referring to various authorities his Lordship said that the judge having found that £1,400 was reasonably spent in demolition he could see no bar to CWS recovering that sum as damages.

He confessed that he would have reached the opposite conclusion with considerable reluctance for he would not like to think that a rule of procedure propounded over 350 years ago to discourage a party



TELEVISION

Is it 17th-century England or our modern era that is portrayed in John Osborne's last screenplay?



VISUAL ART

Fine photography on show: 1930s Germany in focus; and Weegee's view of 1940s New York

THE TIMES ARTS



JAZZ

George Melly has to work hard to win over boisterous punters at Ronnie Scott's



TOMORROW

Reviews of West End films and shows, including Harvey's *Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club*

TELEVISION PREVIEW: John Osborne's final screenplay mixes characteristic bile with (below, right) a life of Purcell

A cavaller's dream of Restoration

John Osborne felt he had been born in the right place at the wrong time. Starting with *Look Back in Anger*, continuing as he grew older and his patriotism grew fiercer, he was forever comparing our leaden era with the silver of Edwardian Britain and the gold of earlier epochs. The key text is the slightly baroque *Sense of Detachment*, in which one character reads extracts from antique love poems and another bits of contemporary porn, giving the impression that England has shrunk from a green and pleasant land into a sex-aid supermarket on the M1.

His last screenplay, *England, My England*, to be shown by Channel 4 on Christmas Day, is better and mostly less bawdy than *Detachment*, but it is in the same tradition. The period is the late 1600s, and a disenchanted actor is simultaneously playing the lead in Shaw's *Good King Charles's Golden Days* and trying to write a TV play about the Restoration and, in particular, the career of Henry Purcell. But Simon Callow, who takes the role, spends relatively little time in his own era. Mostly the action occurs three centuries earlier, with Charles the snarling thespian transformed into Charles the affable, humorous king.

The dangers, which are muddle, paranoia and sentimentality, are not always avoided. Even Tony Palmer's resourceful production seems foxed by the passage at the end when Michael Ball's Purcell swaps his period clothes for modern ones and starts waiting in the wings for the unknown. And you do sometimes get the feeling that the Restoration consisted of Dryden drinking merrily with Pepys in a building by Wren to the accompaniment of Purcell's music and the gentle plash of Lely painting Nell Gwyn, while life today means festering in a seedy flat outside a chemical works as dim dogooders compete with a shrieking Ian Paisley for your attention from the TV set.

But the flip side of that is an enjoyably lavish if overlong history lesson interspersed

with the odd bucketful of bile. Here is the great, late Robert Stephens bringing his mellow charisma to Dryden and his couplets, and here is the late, great Osborne denouncing "prigs, knighthood seekers, grubbing timeservers, malignant opinion-makers, classlessness, correctness", not to mention a monarchy that "isn't even the tarnished gold fillings in a mouthful of decay". As for the Commonwealth, it is "as drab a name for such a monumental swindle since some bright little German admiral thought of putting mass murder in the market as National Socialism". Osborne's not-so-subtle case is that, thanks to Charles's good sense, good nature and eye for talent, 17th-century England recovered from the Commonwealth while we seem to be stuck in a drab Cromwellian winter. But he does make some effort not to idealise the Restoration. We get Great Plague, Great Fire, a hanging and a fairly grisly dissection. We also watch Ball's genial Purcell battling petty bureaucracy, poverty and the loss of child after child before succumbing to the kind of bug a couple of pills would cure today.

Incidental pleasures include the appearance of the impresario Bill Kenwright as a doomy one going to put up with this much violence, not on the telly, and some superb photography. How, for instance, to evoke the devastation of 1666? Night, red light, rushing men, flames from a building reflected in the river, and the whole of London seems ablaze. Of course, this does raise a final question, which is whether fire, smallpox, infant mortality *et al* are quite the subjects for Christmas Day. What next, *Oh Calcutta!* on Good Friday? But I suppose one of the reasons we love and hate Channel 4 is that it is the maverick's opiate. And, as *England, My England* reaffirms, nobody was a more robust and thoroughgoing maverick than Osborne.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Simon Callow as Charles the modern actor — or is it King Charles II? — in *England, My England*, Channel 4's time-travelling Christmas Day treat

There is one very practical reason why Osborne turned a commission for a screenplay about Purcell into the eccentric web of metaphor, whimsy and time-travel that is *England, My England*. Like the legions of musicologists who have churned out articles and books about the great Baroque composer to mark the 300th anniversary of his death, Osborne was aware of how few facts we possess about Purcell's life, or even the manner of his demise. To us, he seems as elusive a figure as Shakespeare.

Except for one thing: much of Purcell's greatest music was written to celebrate the triumphs or mourn the tragedies of the Restoration court. The great strength of *England, My England* is that it takes dozens of those familiar, noble tunes — *Sound the trumpet! I attempt from love's sickness to fly: Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts* — and evokes, in the most sumptuous fashion, a possible historical context for each one.

But even its glitzy is compelling, and sometimes inspired. The Great Fire of London, for instance, is accompanied by Walton's blistering score for the film *The Battle of Britain*: a ludicrous anachronism, yet a brilliantly effective way of setting up ironic echoes across the centuries.

Most important of all, *England, My England* celebrates Purcell's work with real insight. The musical performances, supplied by the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists under John Eliot Gardiner's direction, are as vivid as anything recorded in this tercentenary year. And the fragile perfection of Purcell's music — a marvel conjured out of thin air, one always feels — underlines Osborne's message.

And what is that message? Surely this: if Restoration England — beset by continual catastrophes, economic and natural — managed to maintain the civilised values that allowed genius to flourish,

why can't we? It is, of course, a classic, nostalgic English question: even in Purcell's day they were looking back with misty-eyed longing to the era of Byrd, Shakespeare and Good Queen Bess.

But in this screenplay it acquires a uniquely personal slant. Osborne's reverence for an earlier Englishman whose genius was of a higher order than his own is curiously touching. In the playwright's own swansong, such generosity and perception seem doubly poignant.

RICHARD MORRISON

● *England, My England* will be shown on Channel 4 at 9.05pm on Christmas Day

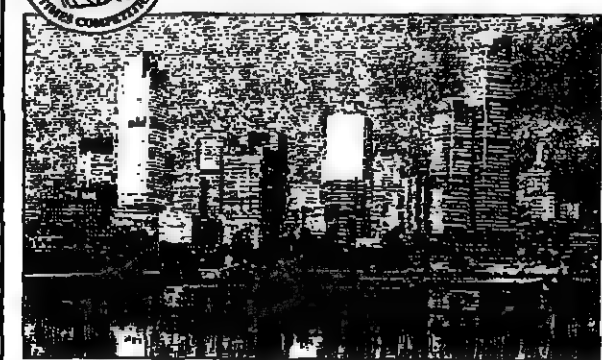
Impeccably arranged and presented, Melly acts as a genial host, guiding listeners through the riches of classic jazz and blues, liberally spicing his informative introductions with off-colour jokes.

The ingredients were all there as usual: a pleasantly slurred version of Fats Waller's *Ain't Misbehavin'* was followed by one of Bessie Smith's most poignant compositions, *Wasted Life Blues*; both *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Frankie and Johnny* received their customary airings; *I'm Beginning to See the Light* and *All of Me* featured neat, intelligent rearrangements. Still the revellers remained committed to their own private parties.

The most promising reaction came when Melly announced that he was going to sing *Underneath the Arches*. When it became clear that the brooding Chilton arrangement was going to emphasise the song's message about homelessness rather than push nostalgia buttons, however, this interest fell away. The band performed with great professionalism — it was just that, on this occasion, the Christmas spirit was clearly flowing into the audience rather than out of it.

CHRIS PARKER

COLLECT 30 TOKENS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN £20,000 FOR AN 80-DAY HOLIDAY



Win a holiday to the Blue Mountains

The Times and The Sunday Times are offering readers the chance to win one of 80 holidays for two, plus 10 per cent discounts, to a range of destinations throughout the world. Today's prize is a nine-day coach tour of Australia for two, including return flights from the UK, worth £3,760. The holiday takes in some of Australia's most famous cities: Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. You will visit the Australian Wildlife Park in the Blue Mountains where there are koalas and kangaroos, visit well-known vineyards, and go to Albury where a chair lift takes you to "Eagles Nest" for a panoramic view of the Alpine scenery.

DEPARTURES: April 6, 13 and 27, May 4 and 11, 1996. The price for the land tour with our 10% discount is £792 per person, down from £880, and does not include return flights.

TODAY'S PRIZE: To win today's holiday answer the question below and phone our competition hotline: 0891 40 50 34 which is open until midnight tonight. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received. Normal Times Newspapers competition rules apply.

1. Name two animals often seen in the Blue Mountains.

Calls are charged at 30p per minute (cheap rates and 45p at all other times).

THE TIMES Around the World in 80 Days £20,000 TOKEN 73

Australian Pacific Tours Australia Pacific Tours offers readers 10% discount on today's holiday and all the cash prizes featured this week. The price covers twin share accommodation with breakfast, four dinners and nightclothing. For a brochure call: 01369 707711

PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWS: Life through the lens, from 19th-century anthropology to modern City law firms

Candid camera on the Nazi hens

Those who have a penchant for photo-stories will be delighted by German Photographs of the 1930s. At the time, German publications were fond of using the form to tell wry, cautionary tales. A few are exhibited here, one of the funniest concerning a portly, middle-aged man who receives a police summons because of his noisy dog. The expressions on the man's face are impossibly absurd, captured by a (sadly) unknown photographer.

These photo-stories form part of the archive of the Kinship Press Agency: 25,000 photographs of pre-war Germany that were discovered last year in a Dutch shed by the Archive of Modern Conflict. The images are a valuable historical tool, showing the growing influence of the Nazi party. In one of the most striking shots, a clutch of hens is mustered in swastika formation, the result of a loyal farmer's arrangement of seed.

Some of the propaganda comes in a more obvious form, especially the three portraits of a chain smoker, an alcoholic and a cocaine addict. The subjects are lit in an Expressionist manner, their features as stark and horrible as the lunatics in Nazi films promoting eugenics.

Many of the images show technological progress and order. Zeppelins float over the Brandenburg Gate, half-naked young men of the German Labour Service march in rank to perform gymnastics with tree trunks, and nuns are shown on the telephone. However, one 1932 shot, showing a man with his toy soldiers, is ironic. The caption reads: "This vast army is beyond the control of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles."

□ Weegee's work is familiar to many, but even cognoscenti of one of the world's most successful news photographers should visit this exhibition, which consists of more than 50 images from the 1940s. Weegee's ability to capture the full drama, gore, intimacy, emotion and spectacle of New York City made him into a celebrity, earning the Austrian immigrant assignments from *Life* and *Vogue*. Weegee was even the subject of a recent film, *Public Eye*, starring Joe Boed.

Much of his early work is particularly grisly, especially the images of the recently maimed, killed or murdered. Weegee, whose real name was Arthur Fellig, kept a police radio in his car, which enabled him to beat his rivals to crime scenes.

Although he is best known for images of brutality, much of Weegee's work is considerably more upbeat. His pictures of the crowds on the beach at Coney Island are joyous, and particularly so is the famous *Summer Comfort*, in which a group of children stand next to a spouting fire hydrant — a scene memorably aped by Francis Ford Coppola in *The Godfather*. When Weegee tired of crime photography, he turned his lens towards New York socialites, capturing the absurdity of their fancy in relation to the streets.

London Projects, 1-2 Ellis Street, London SW1 (0171-734 1723) until December 22

□ Much business sponsorship comes in the form of cash rather than commission. Donations are of course hard to fault, but it is pleasing to see companies setting some form of artistic agenda. Recently a firm of City solicitors, Rowe & Maw, commissioned Noel Myles to depict the effects of the last 100 years on the City lawyer.

Although Myles trained as a



Waterproof waders for the Berlin sewers, one of the curious and arresting images from German Photographs of the 1930s

painter, since 1984 his work has largely been in the medium of photocollage, the results of which are impressive and fun to look at. Myles produced three large collages for the firm. *The Centenary* depicts the changing nature of communication and its impact on the profession with barristers talking to each other in the shadow of Lincoln's Inn, plus satellite dishes and the Internet. *The City* shows London in its capacity as one of the planet's centres of commerce — a busy amalgam of dealing

rooms, post-modern architecture, railway trains and construction. *The Client*, the most striking of all the collages, displays the worlds of music, printing, publishing, manufacture and entertainment. Above all, what is most heartening about these images is their revelation that the law isn't always an ass.

Royal Photographic Society, The Octagon, Milson Street, Bath (01225 462841), until mid-January

GUY WALTERS

The Photographers' Gallery is playing host to a range of anthropological artefacts, culled from a variety of collections, in an exhibition curated by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI). An array of 19th and early 20th-century photographs and documents is displayed alongside the work of three contemporary artists, Zarina Bhimji, Faisal AbdulAllah and Dave Lewis, who were commissioned to respond both to the 19th-century image of non-Western man, and to current anthropological debates.

Dave Lewis's photographs juxtapose a naked male black model with photographs and paintings of the clothed, white RAI workforce. Nakedness suggested a "natural" existence to the 19th-century white anthropologist. Lewis uses a sense of spectacle to heighten the inherent gap between the people in anthropological photographs, and the men behind the cameras.

Faisal AbdulAllah agrees that the hierarchies seen in photographs are important. But AbdulAllah demands that viewers adopt a standpoint. He creates works on polished copper plates and mirrors, and thereby involves the viewer directly. AbdulAllah suggests that non-Western people were once viewed as objects of desire, representing a mysterious "Other", and that this is still true today.

One of the works he has chosen to exhibit forms three sides of an open-topped cuboid, seven feet tall, mirrored within, and with a ramp inviting the viewer to enter. Once inside, your image is reflected over a grid system that AbdulAllah has laid over the mirror. Opposite this work, old RAI lantern-slides show the same grid system being used to measure "foreign" skulls and features.

The work of all three artists is presented surrounded by the images that have prompted it. However, the exhibition itself is not didactic: the artefacts and images are allowed to speak for themselves.

Photographers' Gallery, 5 & 8 Great Newport St, London WC2 (0171-831 1772), until Jan 13

CHARLOTTE MULLENS



YOUNG ARTS

And for my next trick, circus skills are passed on to the next generation



POP

The effortless appeal of Mr Hucknall is shown once more in Simply Red's Wembley gig

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 1

The vivacity of medieval carols is missing from a lacklustre concert by the Dufay Collective



MUSIC 2

The charity War Child benefits when John Williams and Carlos Bonell strum together

Roll up, roll up, to watch children learn the skills of the circus. A wary Hilary Finch enters the ring

It's all a question of balance

There are times when I seriously consider taking out a Young at Art insurance policy. A cassette-recorder, and notepad, are small protection against a posse of unicyclists approaching at full pelt, or a rainstorm of flying knives. "Well, yeah, it could chop a carrot, yeah. And if you drop it on a wooden floor, it'll stick in..." This was a week ago in Leeds, at Circus Zanni. The youngest participant is four and juggles with a cloud of chiffon scarves. The oldest is 18, a national champion in unicycle hockey.

They meet every Monday evening for an hour and a half of gently monitored hair-raising activity. Jade Cracknell, 11, danced for seven years, tried judo and drama, got bored with the lot, and is now on the trapeze. She nearly ran me over juggling on stilts. Thomas Stephens, six, had a grandfather under the big top and, in his first attempt at "tight-rope" walking, on an inverted bench, makes it to the end without a wobble, and within minutes is juggling as he goes.

Mesmerised by ten-year-old Michael Delucchi's progress across the room on a huge black globe, I was nearly mown down by Ian and Gavin Radforth, unicycle devils of Otley. They are in the national unicycle hockey league. "It's nice and fast, racing about w' r'ball. Yes, you fall off, and a few spectators get hit. And you get muddled up with yer hands when you're gooin' for r'ball, 'cos you're riding so fast. But it makes a much better unicyclist out of you."

Their father, Brian, a motor mechanic by profession, is now turning his hand to unicycle manufacture. "You can get 'em six feet tall, y'know: three-tie unicycles. I'm only just beginning. This 'ere is the Rolls-Royce of unicycles. It were £200. We bought it in Holland."

Circus Zanni, which has 20 members aged between six and 18, was formed by Stephen Ward in 1992 as a founder member of the National Association of Youth Circus (NAYC), of which Ward is secretary. Skills developed in groups such as Zanni feed into professional training centres such as Circus Spee in London. Circosmedia in Bristol and Zippo's Academy, while Germany and the United States still have no umbrella organisation, the NAYC has



Children practise at Circus Zanni. The youngest member, aged four, can juggle expertly; the oldest, 18, is national champion in unicycle hockey

got itself a sturdy constitution and an admirable Code of Practice.

It offers training, guidance and support to 43 groups in the UK representing youth circus, youth theatre and professional circus. It takes a neutral stance in political debate, and organises insurance, training and first-aid schemes. And it is recognised by the European Federation for the Education of Occupational Travellers.

So how do groups like Zanni relate to the traditional travelling families? Ward unravels one or two of the knots in the safety net. "A sea-change is coming. Ten years ago there was a movement called New

Circus, which grew from community roots as a reaction to traditional circus and particularly to the animal problem. As far as I'm concerned, New Circus has died the death — and we're moving towards a synthesis between traditional skills and circus which incorporates dance, music, drama. The Association of Circus Professionals recognises that this is the way forward if circus is to survive. The NAYC has been sponsored by Gerry Cottle this year. And at festivals abroad we often use equipment provided by circus families."

Ward is a full-time teacher in theatre studies and has a master's degree in educational circus. He came to circus



through commedia dell'arte and acrobatics. "It all has to be put into a dramatic context for me, otherwise it's just a parading of physical skills. A tight-rope walker for me is an emblem of the tension between negative and positive, good and evil, success and failure."

Ward's obsession with the transforming power of circus skills, particularly in children with physical, social and behavioural difficulties, led him to produce a resource pack for teachers to access all areas of the National Curriculum through circus skills.

He has a theory of what he calls super-learning. "Kids actually learn quicker through circus activities. I once met a physics teacher who was teaching gravity. So I offered to teach it my way. We threw the books into a corner, got rid of the desks, and spent the morning juggling. All balance skills are science-based: fulcrum, inertia, forces. You can learn primary maths brilliantly

through juggling. Geography through the ethnographic distribution of circus. History too."

And of course, all of the arts. "If drama is the underlay, the trouble is, it's still a minority activity. We're still a totally voluntary organisation. But people are beginning to sit up and listen. I had a fax yesterday from Kazakhstan, asking for information. Someone said the boom time is over, but I think it's still to come."

Information about the NAYC and lists of local youth circus groups from: Stephen Ward, 1 Moorgate Rise, Kippax, Leeds LS25 7RG. Telephone and fax: 0113-257 6000

CLASSICAL CONCERTS

Original thinking in need of practice

SINCE its formation in 1987, the Dufay Collective has built an enviable reputation as a versatile, invigorating interpreter of medieval and Renaissance music. Its contribution to the Magenta Christmas Festival at St John's, entitled *Thys Yool: Music for a Tudor Christmas*, was a typically inventive programme, competently rather than brilliantly performed, and somewhat lacking the high-voltage charge with which the ensemble is usually identified.

Three instrumentalists covered most of the bases: everything from recorders and shawms (sounding more than ever untamed here) to slide trumpets and sackbuts. Two more provided virginals, harp and lute. But this versatility has a flaw: too many instruments are simply not played well enough. And when the members of the Collective broke into song, I thought I was listening to carols round the Christmas tree at Brent Cross shopping centre.

In their defence, it could be argued that musicians of the period were not specialists in the modern sense, and that their adaptability gave their music-making a spontaneity that many present-day interpretations have lost. That argument would be easier to accept if these performances had had real fire in their belly. Dufay's *Ce jour de l'an* and various anonymous 15th-century dances offered some raw timbres and lively rhythms. But the razor-sharp edges

Dufay Collective
St John's

yielded only by the highest virtuosity eluded them.

The problem was compounded by their two guest vocalists. John Potter comes bearing the credentials of the Hilliard Ensemble, and his singing exemplifies their refinement: his account of Henry VIII's *Grene groweth the Holy* was exquisite. Vivien Ellis, with her colourless, one-dimensional tone and dialect-inflected pronunciation, tends more towards the ethos of the Collective. The songs in which the singers combined demonstrated two quite different approaches to the repertoire.

The doleful strains of the anonymous 16th-century *Wher be ye my Love?*, however, suited Ellis's plangent delivery ideally, and this song formed part of a group of items in which the performers were heard at their best. It also included a prelude and three anonymous dances played stylishly on the lute by Jacob Heringman, and an intabulation of a Sermisy chanson given by Peter Skuce on the virginals.

This is an ensemble of genuine musical talents, but other groups have shown that there is no necessary contradiction between an animated, earthy delivery and supreme professionalism.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Charitable guitars

IT WAS the night of the long thumbnails. John Williams, Carlos Bonell, friends and relations had filled the Wigmore Hall to overflowing for an evening of guitar music from Telemann to Takemitsu. It was all in aid of War Child, a charity which has been trucking food, clothing and medical supplies to Bosnia and setting up an important children's music centre in Mostar.

In the light of all this it would be more than churlish to comment on the light weight and heavy length of the programme, so I shall speed ahead to the evening's high points. Originally written for two lutes, Telemann's *Polish Suite* was played by Williams and Bonell with coppery tone,

Williams/Bonell
Wigmore Hall

ornaments nicely agreed, phrase endings trilled and teased with glee and great style. Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance* was a twin peak: Bonell, his son Dario Rossetti-Bonell and bass-player Tom Herbert re-created a polyphony of thrummings and motifs whose constantly shifting sonorities leapt high in the hall's vivid acoustics.

Flautist Nicholas Cartledge joined Rossetti-Bonell and Herbert for a jazz triptych. Duke Ellington's *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* revealed Herbert as a mean bassist and Cartledge as an Ariel of the flute. Jobim's *How Insensitive* opened up choruses for a sultry alto flute and for guitar, while Chick Corea's *Spain*, starting with a marvellous meditative rhapsody by Rossetti-Bonell, succeeded in wittily dislocating Hispanic cliché and image while retaining a vivid sense of place.

Albeniz's skill in celebrating and universalising the local is legendary, and Williams gave an exquisitely turned performance of *Cordoba*, a ghostly monastic choir of a piece resonating in jewelled architecture. Brouwer's *Cuban Landscape with Bells*, a highly original evocation in minimalist ostinato and notes and figures repeated in a spectrum of timbres, was re-created artfully by Bonell.

The first half ended with Williams and Bonell trailing their way through Giuliani's arrangement of the overture to *The Barber of Seville* (it really makes you appreciate Rossetti's orchestration), and the second half with Zapateado Caribe by Barrios. At ten o'clock the party had only just begun.

HILARY FINCH

Leap into crime

THE TIMES THEATRE CLUB

IN 1958, Agatha Christie's mystery *The Mousetrap* became the longest-running show in the history of British theatre. In 1995, it is still running, into its 44th year as the classic stage whodunit. Now Theatre Club members have the chance to become members of an even more exclusive club — those who have seen the play on its least-frequent date of performance. On February 29, we have booked St Martin's Theatre, in the West End, to host a leap year *Mousetrap* with a difference. Members will be given a copy of *The Mousetrap Story* (normally £4 per couple, and there will be a talk by David Turner, artistic director of Mousetrap Productions).

Tickets are £14 (stall and dress circle), £10 (upper circle) and £5 (balcony seats) — a saving of up to £8. To apply for tickets, send details of your full name, address and the price and number of tickets required to: Mousetrap Private Performance, Centre Stage, 140 Bath Road, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 5AW. Please make cheques payable to Centre Stage. A number of packages deals are also available. Choose from dinner before or after the show; after-show dinner/cabaret and hotel deals.

LONDON

Wyndham's Theatre

Dec 27-30

IN A climate of sexual hypocrisy, a wilful young widow discovers love for the second time. But when news of her marriage reaches her obsessive and sadistic brothers, they vow to destroy her. *The Duchess of Malfi*, John Webster's explosive study of evil, is as sensational today in Cheek by Jowl's production as when it first shook Jacobean audiences. Members can buy top-price tickets for the price of one (normally £17 to £19) for 7.30pm performances on Dec 27-30 and the 2.30pm matinee on Dec 30. Tel 0171-369 1746

Lyric Theatre

Dec 27, 29, Jan 2-3

TICKETS £6.25 (normally £12.50) for 11am performances of the pantomime,

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Tel 0181-741 2311

STIRLING

MacRobert's Arts Centre

Jan 2-6

STUART PATERSON'S version of the classic fairy tale, *The Snow Queen*, is a ravishing mixture of music, sumptuous costumes and stunning sets. Two tickets for the price of one (normally £9) for evening performances and the matinee on Jan 2 and 3. Tel 01786 461081

CHESTERFIELD

Pomegranate Theatre

Jan 2-5

SAVE 20 per cent on tickets (normally £6.50) for 7pm performances of *The Little Mermaid*. Tel 01246 232901

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PRESTON

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Dec 26-30, Jan 1

TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £8.95 and £7.95) for the 7pm performances of the pantomime *Aladdin*. Tel 01772 258838

LEICESTER

Haymarket Theatre

Until Jan 13

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WEYMOUTH

Pavilion Theatre

Jan 2-5

TWO tickets for the price of one (normally £8.95 and £7.95) for 11am performances and the Jan 3 matinee of the pantomime *Aladdin*. Tel 01305 783225

Still holding back the years

POP

Simply Red
Wembley Arena

OASIS have Britain's top-selling album of 1995, Celine Dion its second, and somewhere not too far behind in the final listings can be found *Life* by Simply Red. Had Mick Hucknall released his fifth LP sooner rather than later in the year, the rankings might have turned out rather differently.

But no matter, such an achievement is impressive enough, ten years on from his first chart entry. At a time when many of his original peers have either faded away completely or are attempting their umpteenth comeback, the 35-year-old singer-songwriter's star is still in the ascendancy. *Fairground*, his recent No 1 single, was his first in this country.

Coming from similar north-western roots to new boys Oasis, but appealing inevitably to some of those middle-of-the-roads now captivated by Dion, Hucknall is Britain's one true multi-denominational, multi-demographic pop star.

This commercial omnipotence is all the more impressive in that he is not a man given to trying too hard. There is something almost effortless about each Simply Red album, particularly the most recent. Despite its subtle updating of a trademark sound, *Life* is happily free of the ingratiating mannerisms and cloying sentimentality which are the stock-in-trade of many of the band's mainstream peers.

And so, too, with this opening performance in an intimate that sees Hucknall filling



Mick Hucknall starts his tour de force at Wembley Arena

arena-sized venues around Britain throughout January and February. The innovative staging — two small circular platforms on the Wembley floor, linked by a snaking walkway — may help to facilitate an intimacy unusual for so large a venue, but it is Hucknall's relaxed persona

and unflashy artistry which seal the evening's mood.

And, with the first half of a 21-song set-list dominated by the less obviously attention-grabbing songs that so often emerge as the enduring pleasures within the band's catalogue — *So Many People*, *Enough and Never, Never*

Love — the sense is confirmed that musicianship, not showmanship, remains his priority.

Aided by two elegantly stalking backing singers and one of the best bands to enliven a British stage this year (the contributions of guitarist Heitor Pereira and saxophonist Ian Kirkham in particular are a joy), Hucknall then moves on to embrace the

Hucknall's voice remains an instrument rather than a weapon

pretty (*Holding Back the Years* and *Stars*), the political (*Money's too Tight to Mention*) and the cheerfully promiscuous (*Unfidelity* and *The Right Thing*) sides of Simply Red.

Each is executed immaculately, with genuine emotional force and yet without self-aggrandisement — a balance beyond the reach of most other domestic big-sellers of this ilk. This is Hucknall's particular achievement. The sense remains of a man driven by his love of music, rather than a desire to be an icon or a popular hero.

The voice — glorious enough to cause a less well-balanced owner to become a raging ego-maniac — remains an instrument with a collective sound, rather than a weapon to be deployed in pursuit of applause.

Which makes this current run of concerts a must-see for fans. Simply Red — the band and the man — are on devastating form.

ALAN JACKSON

'Dazzling farce'
Guardian
Hysteria
Terry Johnson's
'custard pie of comic brilliance'
Time Out
Date of Year 1995 438 512

Dunwoody given ride on One Man at Kempton

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

JOHN HALES, the owner of One Man, yesterday explained his decision to replace Tony Dobbin with Richard Dunwoody on the favourite for the King George VI Tripleprint Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day.

After speaking to Gordon Richards, the trainer of the exciting grey, Hales issued a statement to end the "uncertainty" over riding arrangements. "There were concerns on my part that Tony Dobbin will only have returned to race-riding a little over one week prior to the big race on Boxing Day after his recent injury. I also took into consideration that it would be the first time in the King George for both horse and rider," the Shropshire-based businessman said.

"We now find that One Man, probably the youngest horse in the race, has now



Dunwoody's greater experience helped him to win the mount on One Man

RICHARD EVANS
Naps: ALICE SMITH
(1.15 Ludlow)
Next best: Silver Shred
(3.15 Ludlow)

become favourite. We considered that with such a talented young horse, it may be wiser on this occasion to call on the experience and ability of Richard Dunwoody, who is available and who has had the experience of riding in this race on many previous occasions.

"In normal circumstances, we are very happy to have Tony Dobbin as our jockey and both Gordon and I look forward to seeing Tony ride our horse in the next race after the King George, which is likely to be in February."

The owner's final remarks inevitably leave open the possibility that if One Man fulfils expectations in the forthcoming weeks Dunwoody could be booked to take over at the Cheltenham Gold Cup in March.

Not surprisingly, Dobbin was disconsolate when he was told of the news by Richards after first lot at the trainer's Greystoke yard. "What have I

done wrong?" the fresh-faced 23-year-old asked.

The answer, of course, is nothing. While that will hardly assuage his disappointment, Dobbin's time will come. Most owners, placed in Hales's shoes, would have taken the same decision, given the slight concern about Dobbin's fitness. Dunwoody is the best stepchild jockey around and his supreme skill and experience can make the difference between victory and defeat, especially in big races, as Ascot racegoers and millions of viewers witnessed on Saturday when he partnered Unguided Missile to an unlikely success for Richards.

While Dobbin will bounce

back from this setback, racing will find it tougher to cope with the swinging £5 million reduction in planned expenditure agreed yesterday by the Horserace Betting Levy Board.

Despite the benefits arising from the 1 per cent cut in betting duty announced in the Budget, the substantial pruning is necessary because of the decline in betting turnover, mainly brought about by the impact of the Lottery. The betting turnover slump means the levy paid by punters will be £2.3 million short of expectations for last year, and the shortfall this year will be around £6 million.

As expected, the brunt of the

cutbacks will fall upon contributions to prize-money, which will be reduced from £32,985,000 to £29,529,000 in 1996-97. Originally, a 2.6 per cent increase in prize-money had been planned.

The cuts also apply to budgets covering Jockey Club race-day officials (£410,000 reduction in grant); breeders' prizes (£105,000); veterinary science and education (£184,000); appearance money scheme (£32,000); point-to-point (£18,000); breed societies (£39,000); a further £586,000 in savings have been found by deferring or cancelling schemes. But for the Chancellor's largesse, the cuts would have been far worse.

As expected, the brunt of the

LUUDLOW

THUNDERER
12.45 Commanchero 2.15 The Caumre
1.15 Alice Smith 2.45 Mine's An Ace
1.45 Goldenswift 3.15 Silver Shred

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating:
3.15 SILVER SHRED.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

12.45 TANNERS CAVA CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (E1,958, 2m 5f 110yds) (16 runners)

101 PRECIOUS JUNGLE 16 (J.P. Smith) 11-10
102 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
103 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
104 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
105 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
106 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
107 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
108 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
109 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
110 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
111 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
112 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
113 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
114 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10
115 COMMANCHERO 12 (J. P. Smith) 11-10
116 BARRYEN 13 (D. J. Smith) 11-10

Long handicap Quick Decision 9-12, Doncaster 9-11, 11-10, 12-11, 13-12, 14-13, 15-14, 16-15, 17-16, 18-17, 19-18, 20-19, 21-20, 22-21, 23-22, 24-23, 25-24, 26-25, 27-26, 28-27, 29-28, 30-29, 31-30, 32-31, 33-32, 34-33, 35-34, 36-35, 37-36, 38-37, 39-38, 40-39, 41-40, 42-41, 43-42, 44-43, 45-44, 46-45, 47-46, 48-47, 49-48, 50-49, 51-50, 52-51, 53-52, 54-53, 55-54, 56-55, 57-56, 58-57, 59-58, 60-59, 61-60, 62-61, 63-62, 64-63, 65-64, 66-65, 67-66, 68-67, 69-68, 70-69, 71-70, 72-71, 73-72, 74-73, 75-74, 76-75, 77-76, 78-77, 79-78, 80-79, 81-80, 82-81, 83-82, 84-83, 85-84, 86-85, 87-86, 88-87, 89-88, 90-89, 91-90, 92-91, 93-92, 94-93, 95-94, 96-95, 97-96, 98-97, 99-98, 100-99, 101-100, 102-101, 103-102, 104-103, 105-104, 106-105, 107-106, 108-107, 109-108, 110-109, 111-110, 112-111, 113-112, 114-113, 115-114, 116-115, 117-116, 118-117, 119-118, 120-119, 121-120, 122-121, 123-122, 124-123, 125-124, 126-125, 127-126, 128-127, 129-128, 130-129, 131-130, 132-131, 133-132, 134-133, 135-134, 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1019-1018, 1020-1019, 1021-1020, 1022-1021, 1023-1022, 1024-1023, 1025-1024, 1026-1025, 1027-1026, 1028-1027, 1029-1028, 1030-1029, 1031-1030, 1032-1031, 1033-1032, 1034-1033, 1035-1034, 1036-1035, 1037-1036, 1038-1037, 1039-1038, 1040-1039, 1041-1040, 1042-1041, 1043-1042, 1044-1043, 1045-1044, 1046-1045, 1047-1046, 1048-1047, 1049-1048, 1050-1049, 1051-1050, 1052-1051, 1053-1052, 1054-1053, 1055-1054, 1056-1055, 1057-1056, 1058-1057, 1059-1058, 1060-1059, 1061-1060, 1062-1061, 1063-1062, 1064-1063, 1065-1064, 1066-1065, 1067-1066, 1068-1067, 1069-1068, 1070-1069, 1071-1070, 1072-1071, 1073-1072, 1074-1073, 1075-1074, 1076-1075, 1077-1076, 1078-1077, 1079-1078, 1080-1079, 1081-1080, 1082-1081, 1083-1082, 1084-1083, 1085-1084, 1086-1085, 1087-1086, 1088-1087, 1089-1088, 1090-1089, 1091-1090, 1092-1091, 1093-1092, 1094-1093, 1095-1094, 1096-1095, 1097-1096, 1098-1097, 1099-1098, 1100-1099, 1101-1100, 1102-1101, 1103-1102, 1104-1103, 1105-1104, 1106-1105, 1107-1106, 1108-1107, 1109-1108, 1110-1109

Times writers give their Christmas selections of the best in sporting literature in 1995

Platt transfers his versatile talents from pitch to pen

IT HAS been an awful year for football books. Footballers by the score, it seems, are swapping their boots for the quill and penning their thoughts with the facility of seasoned journalists. This cannot go on.

There was a time, before wretched Nick Hornby proved that football literature was not an oxymoron, when the standard footballers' oeuvre consisted of a variation on the theme of "I done good, Brian", but Eamon Dunphy's diary of a season at Millwall hinted at better things and Garry Nelson has taken the cause of the dog-eared pro a step further with his *Left Foot Forward: A Year in the Life of a Journeyman*

Footballer, which was shortlisted for the William Hill prize.

Not even that treasured work of art, the ghosted autobiography, is safe from this prowling football intelligentsia. David Platt wrote *Achieving the Goal* himself, though it is difficult to know where he found the time, with so much of his exemplary and lucrative career spent on the telephone, negotiating his next move. Platt loves the cut and thrust of transfers, not for the money so much as the challenge, the chance of improvement and, if the jury is still out on the success of his latest move to Arsenal, the world's most expensive footballer has given good value for his £22.5 million fees. And his telephone

calls. The book is equally worthy, the style not far removed from his game. Simple, honest, thoughtful, seldom inspirational, occasionally abrasive.

Platt had the imagination to succeed in Italian football, but one classic story from his time at Sampdoria shows why so many fall headlong into the cultural divide. Towards the end of an unfulfilled season, the head of the *doratori*, the passionate supporters of Sampdoria, wrote to Roberto Mancini, the club captain, asking him if the team could do their pre-match callisthenics on the pitch, not in the tunnel before the next home game. The *doratori*, you see, felt they had earned the right to

jeer the team, but did not want to be so disloyal during the game.

So, at 3.30pm the next Sunday, the team went out onto the pitch, the crowd whistled for exactly two minutes before breaking into the traditional chants of "Doria, Doria" in time for kick-off. "We were united in what we failed to achieve," Platt wrote, "and gladly accepted the whistles." Shades of Elland Road, perhaps?

The diary is a more intimate literary form than the autobiography. The reader has to be shown inner thoughts, hidden emotions, personal doubts. Both

Nelson's Charlton chronicle and the equally absorbing *A Year in the Life*, by Alex Ferguson, edited by Peter Ball, of *The Times*, sustain that essential sense of whispered confidence. Ferguson, on the verge of greatness as a manager, admits to being tactically outwitted in United's defeat by Barcelona and tortures himself over the ultimate responsibility to the club, personal admiration for the player and the need to win pots during *L'affaire Cantona*. Ice Cold Alex revealed, in fact.

Objective judgment of Cantona has not been easy in any quarter, but Ian Ridley, master of the pun, provides an admirable balance in *The Red and the Black*, a tide

borrowed, as Cantona will doubtless know, from Stendhal. The biography is all the better for being unauthorised. Tom Watt's *Passion for the Game: Real Lives in Football*, and *Kicking and Screaming*, the book of the BBC series, happily show that emotions in football can be expressed without resort to long fu. Both are ideal for the quick dip rather than total immersion, while the *Footballers' Profile* is the official guide to every player on the books of the Professional Footballers' Association. You can tell it is official because it calls Vinnie Jones "tough tackling". Essential for every journalist, at least. Now where did I put my football boots?

□ *Left Foot Forward*, by Garry Nelson (Headline, £12.99).
□ *A Year in the Life*, by Alex Ferguson (Virgin, £12.99).
□ *Achieving the Goal*, by David Platt (Richard Cohen Books, £2.99).
□ *The Red and the Black*, by Ian Ridley (Collins, £14.99).
□ *A Passion for the Game: Real Lives in Football*, by Tom Watt (Mainstream, £14.99).
□ *Kicking and Screaming*, by Rogan Taylor and Andrew Ward (Robson Books, £16.95).
□ *Footballers' Profile*, edited by Barry Hugman (Stanley Paul, £3.99).

ANDREW LONGMORE

Spurred to fame by childhood sorrow

THERE was a familiar theme running through many of the cricket biographies and autobiographies published in 1995, and perhaps it ran through those of other sports as well. It stated that, simple, uncomplicated types though they/we may appear, underneath they/we are really highly complex, misunderstood heroes.

Take the late Brian Johnston, veteran broadcaster and jester at the court of *Test Match Special* for so many years. No summer or more straightforward man in the world, surely?

Not so, said Tim Heald, his biographer. The driving forces behind Johnston's life were the drowning of his father and his mother's remarriage by the time that he was ten; any joke, any distraction helped to shut out the harshness of the real world. It is a persuasive thesis in a rounded and revealing portrait of a man who, for many, embodied cricket.

A similar argument forms part of David Gower's *A Man Out of Time*, by Rob Steen. Gower also had to cope with the early death of his father, as well as a lonely childhood in Africa, which may explain why he has guarded his emotions with as much skill and dexterity as he usually — but not always — did his stumps.

As the narrative makes clear, though, Gower has not escaped being hurt, either on or off the field. Mark Nicholas said that he has never known a man who had more people caring about him and a factor in Gower's decision to

retire as a player after the 1993 season was that he felt slighted by his treatment at the hands of the England selectors. This is a timely review of an often glorious, sometimes turbulent career.

Ted Dexter, the subject of a biography by Alan Lee, *The Times* cricket correspondent, shared Gower's abundance of talent and apparent insouciance. Gower even described Dexter as a "kindred spirit", perhaps more so than he realised. Dexter, as Lee's book amply charts, was adept at concealing from the public spotlight a private persona which was that of a painfully shy man, plagued by frustrated ambitions.

There is a thin line between a personal history that demands sympathy and plain whingeing, and it is a line that Martin Crowe's autobiography, *Out on a Limb: My Own Story*, crosses regularly. Crowe has had his trials to contend with, but it is sad that one so talented should linger so often over petty squabbles.

It required another book about Crowe, an unauthorised biography by Joseph Romanos, published in New Zealand, to point out that he was, when captain, not liked by many of his team-mates. Crowe's ruthless pursuit of batting perfection probably got in the way of his relationships and has almost certainly made it impossible for him to reflect with gratitude on a career that touched greatness.

□ *Brian Johnston: The Authorised Biography*, by Tim Heald (Methuen, £14.99).
□ *David Gower: A Man Out of Time*, by Rob Steen (Collins, £16.99).
□ *Lord Ted: The Dexter Enigma*, by Alan Lee (Collins, £16.99).
□ *Out on a Limb: My Own Story*, by Martin Crowe (Reed, £14.99).

SIMON WILDE



Arthur Thrill's stunning photograph of the fire that engulfed Jos Verstappen's Benetton Formula One car in the pit lane at the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim in 1994 won the colour gold lens award in the International Olympic Committee's best of sport photographic contest this year. Thrill's photograph features in *Best 7*, a celebration of the year's best sports photography.

□ *Best 7* (Kensington West Productions, £19.99) ISBN 1871349087.

Inside story captures drama of life in fast lane

SOMETIMES there might be something on a team owner or engineer thrown in for the sake of appearances, but the vast majority of modern motor racing books are devoted to either an individual driver or his team. This year has been no different, although there was a twist in its tail: the author and photographer who produced one of the best efforts of last year with their study of Damon Hill's season turned their attention to his Williams-Renault team this year.

Time and again, this genre degenerates into a worthy but tedious dissection of the anatomy of a team and esoteric discussions of the workings of the smallest parts. *Pole Position: the Inside Story of Williams-Renault*, managed to avoid this fate.

It does dig beneath the surface, examining the arduous role of the

team manager, taking us through dramas such as the day when the catering manager had the tips of his fingers sliced off while he was trying to fix the motor-home en route to a race, but Maurice Hamilton's swift narrative and the superb pictures of Jon Nicholson, that turn simple factory shots of team personnel into fascinating portraits, never stray too far away from the racetrack where the drama is at its height.

If there are criticisms, the pictures could have been used bigger and the breadth of the subject necessitates a slightly broader, more syrupy canvas than the intimate study of Hill's turbulent year in 1994; but this effort almost makes up for that with its wider insight into the business of grand prix racing.

For individual studies, the pick of Formula One books this year is

the autobiography of Nigel Mansell, meticulously researched and cleverly written by James Allen. It provoked some mirth among the steable anti-Mansell faction because of its flat title — *Nigel Mansell: My Autobiography* — but, once they had got over that, even his detractors admitted it was an interesting read. A pithy final chapter, added at short notice, examines Mansell's ill-fated stay at McLaren at the beginning of the 1995 season.

McLaren, predictably, are also featured heavily in the updated, spruced-up version of Eoin Young's affectionate portrayal of the team's founder, *Bruce McLaren, the Man and his Racing Team*, explores the foundation

of the team that made world champions out of Emerson Fittipaldi, James Hunt, Niki Lauda, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna.

McLaren's assertion that "to do something well is so worthwhile that to die trying to do it better cannot be foolhardy" is one of a myriad of statements featured in Eugene Weber's *Grand Prix Book of Motor Racing Quotations*. Murray Walker is here in force, of course.

Finally, *The Death of Ayrton Senna*, by Richard Williams, is still a fascinating read 19 months after the death of the Brazilian three-times world champion, all the more so in the light of the recent burst of publicity about what may or may not be the causes of the accident that killed him in May 1994.

This study, combining an inti-

mate look at his career with in-depth description of Senna's funeral and discussion of the events leading to his death, is small but perfectly formed. It is the pick of the year.

□ *Pole Position: The Inside Story of Williams-Renault*, by Maurice Hamilton and Jon Nicholson (Macmillan, £20).

□ *Nigel Mansell: My Autobiography* (Collins Willow, £16.99).

□ *Bruce McLaren, the Man and his Racing Team*, by Eoin Young (Patrick Stephens Ltd, £15.99).

□ *The Grand Prix Book of Motor Racing Quotations*, by Eugene Weber (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99).

□ *The Death of Ayrton Senna*, by Richard Williams (Viking, £12.50).

OLIVER HOIT

Christie's tale of the track runs out of steam before the tape

AFTER reading the two books on Linford Christie published this year, one thing is clear: neither on its own is sufficient. Between them, though, Christie's autobiography and an unauthorised biography tell as much as you would want to know — almost — of Great Britain's Olympic 100 metres champion.

To Be Honest With You is Christie's autobiography and, after saying in his introduction that he "can't complain", he does on several fronts. Nothing permeates the book so much as his unrelenting jibes at Frank Dick, Britain's former director of coaching. The intrusive media and the "shambles" of the drug-testing system also feature.

It seems curious for a man so dependent on close relationships — those with Mandy Miller, his long-time girlfriend, Colin Jackson, and his grandmother are covered in detail — that he appears content that his three children, by former partners, have played such a small part in his life. They are covered in fewer than five pages and only then in the context of Christie defending against scandal.

It does Christie credit, however, that he should not forget Les Jones; indeed, describe him as "a great man". Jones was the popular national team manager when he died three years ago and, were he alive today, one suspects some of the sport's controversies would have been avoided.

Christie's opinions and his readable recollections of childhood in Jamaica,

arrival in Britain, and achievements as an athlete, are enlivened by some diverting stories, such as the time that he was giving a sample for a drugs test, squeezed the beaker, broke it, and covered the doctor in urine. Unfortunately, though, the insight into Christie's training is woefully inadequate and his account of the greatest 100 metres that ever was, the 1991 world championship in Tokyo — which rewrote the all-time list for the distance — is most disappointing.

Duncan Mackay will not be on Christie's Christmas card list for getting to the bookshelves first. When word was out that Christie's autobiography was imminent, a separate publisher asked Mackay for a biography, and fast.

Mackay showed impressive speed, gun to tape in less than a week, a writer's sub-10sec run. *Linford Christie* is held together by what the press has said and why it said it. Christie is not entirely the misrepresented figure he claims to be, as Mackay's version confirms.

□ *To Be Honest With You: Linford Christie's Autobiography* (Michael Joseph, £16.99).

□ *Linford Christie*, by Duncan Mackay (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £12.99).

DAVID POWELL

Fairley offers definitive history of art and the thoroughbred

EVEN if it were not a lean year for equestrian books, John Fairley's *The Art of the Horse* would stand head and shoulders above its rivals. Almost as glossy as the horses it depicts, this sumptuously illustrated book charts the history of the horse in art from the earliest cave paintings through the Greeks and Romans to Stubbs, Munnings and contemporary artists.

Fairley's text is witty, informative and minutely researched. The ancient Greeks had individual starting stalls for racing and devices for opening them; the Romans, whose love of racing is captured here in Alexander von Wagner's magnificent *The Chariot Race*, were the first to record racing form, results and breeding.

Two fine — unattributed — early examples of racehorses in art — *Miss Neasham* (1727), painted in front of Aldby Park in Yorkshire, and *Aleppo* (1727) — are used to place the English thoroughbred in its historical context. It was to Aldby in 1706 that the horse was dispatched that was to become known as the Darley Arabian, prepotent among the three stallions to whom all thoroughbreds now trace back. George Stubbs's *Whistler* epitomises the almost reverential way that the thoroughbred was viewed in the 18th century. Fairley is unequivocal in his praise: "All Stubbs's years of study and dissection come to fruition in this inspiring portrayal of a thoroughbred in the grandeur of his prime."

Linda Tellington-Jones, the author of *Getting in Touch with Horses*, would assess Whistler's character merely by looking at his painting. Tellington-Jones, whose grandfather was the leading trainer for Tsar Nicholas II, identifies a horse's personality from the shape of its head and from its "swirls" — the distinctive patterns in the lay of the hair in an animal's coat. Tellington-Jones also claims to change or modify character by a variety of techniques — there is plenty of evidence here to suggest that it works.

The importance of assessing character is recognised by the three German trainers who have joined forces to write *Dressage Tips and Training Solutions*. Among the sound, practical advice given, the authors state that "many problems in the training of horses would not occur at all if their physical and psychological requirements were recognised".

□ *The Art of the Horse*, by John Fairley (Abbeville Press, £29.95).

□ *Getting in Touch with Horses*, by Linda Tellington-Jones with Sybil Taylor (Kenilworth Press, £14.95).

□ *Dressage Tips and Training Solutions*, by Petra Holzel, Wolfgang Holzel and Martin Plewa (Kenilworth Press, £16.95).

JENNY MACARTHUR

Inspiring triumph against all odds

THE story of Theodore Cecil Thompson — the name "Cec" brings an instant recognition in rugby league — is an inspirational one, of a black northern Englishman, and trailblazer, whose defiance of often painful odds and prejudice, on and off the field, is testimony to the enthusiasm that shines through a compelling autobiography.

Enthusiasm, Thompson writes, has been his greatest ally. It is to enthusiasm — "almost inexhaustible" — constantly moving me forward, sweeping me into almost every department of my life — that he dedicates his success. The virtues of modesty, dignity and courage are writ large in Thompson's own words — not bad for someone whose writing skills in his playing days did not extend beyond his autograph.

Rugby league was the escape from an early life of orphanages and dead-end jobs in Leeds. For his first match, in a work's team, he was simply instructed not to kick or pass the ball forward. His running and tackling were good enough after just two games for Hunslet to sign him in 1948 for £250. "Becoming a professional player in the Hunslet A team was like entering a dream world."

"Hunslet's living bronze," as the *Yorkshire Post* memorably referred to him, was the sport's first prominent black player. Four years after his first appearance, Eddie Waring wrote: "If Cec Thompson is not chosen for the Great

Britain squad, the selectors must be racist."

Thompson's pace and power as a forward would easily have translated into the modern game. His playing career ended at Workington in 1962, but that is merely the half of it. His window-cleaning road became a successful industrial cleaning business; a few stints at journalism turned into an honours degree in economics, a diploma in education eventually to head of economics and rugby master at Chesterfield Grammar School.

In a singular way, Thompson's self-advancement mirrors that of rugby league's first 100 years. The obligatory coffee table glossy for the centenary is lovingly and painstakingly penned, by Geoffrey Moorhouse, whose eye for historic detail never gets in the way of another remarkable story.

Dean Bell's biography is excellent and, of the paperbacks, Trevor Delaney's lavishly illustrated history of international venues and the combined efforts of Dave Farrar and Peter Lush in chronicling the game's history in London expertly fill two large holes.

□ *Cec Thompson: Born on the Wrong Side* (Penguin Press, £14.99).

□ *A People's Game: The Official History of Rugby League 1895-1995*, by Geoffrey Moorhouse (Hodder and Stoughton, £20).

□ *Ultimate Warrior: The Dean Bell Story* (Victor Gollancz, £15.99).

□ *The International Grounds of Rugby League* (Trevor Delaney, £15.95).

□ *Touch and Go: A History of Professional Rugby League in London* (London League Publications, £9.00).

CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

□ *Steffi, A Biography — Public Power, Private Pain*, reviewed yesterday, was written by Sue Headly and not as reported.

DECEMBER 20
e in 1995
pen

Cruel juggernaut of sport claims two more victims

The world looks at sport in two ways, rapidly alternating from one to the other. The first is as a sugar candy world of glory and victory and passion; a pleasing escape from real life. The second is hurt and bewildered shock when people realise that sport also involves rows, cheats, liars and passion run out of control.

The fact is that both views are right. Sport is not pure fun, nor is it pure glassiness. Sport is a strange and terrible drama, that is all; and often, farce and despair walk hand in hand.

The point of farce was reached hilariously with Graeme Le Saux and David Batty, of Blackburn Rovers. A couple of weeks back, the pair got involved in a bout of fist-cuffs in a match against

Spartak Moscow. A lot of people were dreadfully shocked by this; as if every football team comprised of best friends, between whom the merest suggestion of a cross word was the most tremendously volatile thing; as impossible — and as unstable — as a marriage without rows. The thing is to try to avoid having them in public.

Alas, poor Le Saux has moved, in a step, from farce to despair. On Saturday, he received a terrible injury; one that, we learn, may end his career. Nor can anyone be blamed. It was just football. A terrible accident in what is, after all, supposed to be a rough game.

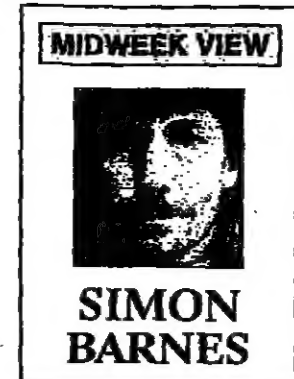
Le Saux is, or was, an England player, one of those

chaps of solid footballing worth, a man without extravagant gifts but with the happy knack of maximising the talents he has. Or had. Rotten luck.

So often, a sports injury seems to be a most devilish kind of caprice. There is no comparing in seriousness the injuries of Le Saux with John Crawley, but Crawley's torn hamstring is also pretty rotten luck all the same.

Crawley has been a coming young man for rather too long. Desperate for success, but with the glittering prizes perpetually a shade beyond his grasp. At one time, he was seen as rather too tubby and unattractive, a poor fielder.

So he managed to lose two stone, started tearing about the outfield and even got himself a special 'I'm-a-super-



MIDWEEK VIEW
SIMON BARNES
keenie" haircut. It worked. Finally, he keened himself back into the Test team. Then tore his hamstring. Fielding. This is unlikely to be a career-ending injury, but it came at a devilishly bad time. Jason Gallian has now been

flown in, and has already been promised Crawley's place in the next Test. Gallian's aim is obviously to make this permanent. All Crawley can do is stick to his backside and pray for a chance to come round again; knowing that it might not.

Sport is a capricious business. Even Michael Atherton, blessed with a success of history-making proportions in the second Test, failed in the third. Yet in a way, failure is something you cater for. Mark Ramprakash may have suffered the most traumatic possible failure, but he has at least the grim solace that it was his own fault; that the redress lies only in himself.

For Crawley, and still worse for Le Saux, there is only the terrible autistic cry of the playground; it is not fair.

Because it is not; and it is the quality of total unfairness that lifts sport out of any comparison with normal professional life. In sport, doing your best can be a career-ending matter. Nobody will say that Barnes gave his all in that last paragraph but, as a result of his exertions, he will never write again.

There are many physically precarious professions, but perhaps only dance involves the risk that, by doing it, you could, in a trice, destroy your career. Nodes on the vocal chords of singers; arthritis in the hands of pianists; these can be desperate matters, but they do not happen in an instant of time, as a result of doing your best.

Sport is a cruel matter. We would not watch it if it were not, for, without adversity, there is

no triumph. We should spare a thought, at a time of year when everything gets buried beneath a candy-coating, for those who pay the price for our pleasures, for our triumphs. Here is Anthony Powell on literary aspiration: the words hold good for aspirations of the sporting kind: "So far as I was concerned, the juggernaut of critical opinion must be allowed to take its irrefragable course. If too fervent worshippers... were crushed to powder beneath the pitiless wheels of its car, nothing could be done. Only their adoration of the idol made them so vulnerable."

All the same, it is a poor person whose heart does not go out to the victims of the rolling wheels of the juggernaut of sport. Alas, poor Graeme, poor John.

Tarango makes belated apology

JEFF TARANGO yesterday apologised for the outburst at the Wimbledon tennis championships that led to a fine of almost £50,000 and a ban from the tournament next year. The American stormed off court during a singles match against Alexander Motz. Later, in an emotional news conference, he questioned the impartiality of Bruno Rebeuh, the umpire.

In August, Tarango was suspended from the 1996 championship and one other grand slam tournament. On appeal, Tarango's fine was reduced to £10,000 and a ban from the tournament next year. The American stormed off court during a singles match against Alexander Motz. Later, in an emotional news conference, he questioned the impartiality of Bruno Rebeuh, the umpire.

He said: "I unequivocally apologise to Mr Bruno Rebeuh for any embarrassment or harm that this incident may have caused him and his family. I do not intend to make such a mistake ever again."

Hilton banned

Rugby league: Tony Hilton, the Rochdale Hornets forward, was yesterday suspended for three months by the Rugby Football League board of directors after he tested positive for the banned substance, ephedrine. Hilton, 24, was tested after Rochdale's match at Featherstone on November 1.

Parker power

Rackets: James Parker, the 15-year-old son of Paul Parker, the former Sussex, Durham and England cricketer, won the junior colts event of the public schools championship at the Queen's Club by crushing Edward Cazalet, of Eton, 15-5, 15-0.

No pay

Snooker: A proposal to pay board members of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association did not receive the two-thirds majority it required at the association's annual meeting in Bristol yesterday.

Wild rice

American football: Jerry Rice received 14 passes for a team-record 289 yards and three touchdowns as the San Francisco 49ers beat the Minnesota Vikings 37-30 on Monday.

Tomba forgets problems

WITH an obvious sense of relief yesterday, of returning to the environment that he knows best and in which he is best, Alberto Tomba won a World Cup slalom skiing race. Problems off-piste were forgotten as Tomba, Italy's favourite sportsman, accepted the garlands and plaudits on home territory at Madonna di Campiglio.

With Jure Kosir falling when leading on his second run, Tomba, the overall World Cup champion, who had been third after the first series, raced down the piste on the second to clock a combined time of 1min 34.62sec for his first victory of the season and the thirtieth in slalom of his career.

Away from skiing, Tomba is facing possible expulsion from the Italian carabinieri after a photographer, who had sold nude photographs of him to a magazine, alleged that the Italian had thrown a heavy glass trophy at him after a World Cup race on Sunday. The carabinieri said in a statement yesterday that it was holding an inquiry into the incident that would "examine the disciplinary position" of Tomba, who holds the rank of sergeant.

Tomba, however, was happy to put such troubles to one side. Yesterday was, after all, also his 29th birthday.

Bible for athletes still running after 50 years

David Powell salutes another milestone in the history of a sport's most authoritative magazine

David Coleman wrote: "Thanks for years of pleasure, education and essential information." Chris Brasher insisted: "The historian of our sport." "An outstanding service," Andy Norman added. "So authoritative that it is obligatory reading" — Sir Arthur Gold.

The letters congratulating *Athletics Weekly* on its fortieth anniversary were as sincere as the publication itself. The International Amateur Athletic Federation expressed its "gratitude for sterling work" and Sebastian Coe spoke for athletes everywhere: "I remember (at Loughborough College) the biggest queue in the library was always for 'AW'. It was the bible."

Today, *Athletics Weekly* is 50 years old. Though blighted in recent years, it is still on its feet, one of only two weekly athletics publications worldwide. It may never again be the reverential organ, but it is more worthy now than at any time since it underwent its transformation.

Readers were cast out of their safe world of statistics, interviews and concise reporting into a jungle of trivia, sensationalism and screaming headlines. When Nigel Walsh, the present editor, wrote in for a job, he did so because he was "appalled at the number of mistakes."

Mind you, *Athletics Weekly*'s very first act was a deliberate statistical mistake. When P.W. "Jimmy" Green, the magazine's founder, produced the first issue, he labelled it Vol II No 1. What happened to Vol I he will not say, save to confirm that it never existed.

On leaving the RAF, after the Second World War, Green used his E150 resettlement grant to start the

magazine. Now 86, Green recalled: "Several leading officials said: 'Don't waste your money, don't be so damned silly, it will never succeed,' but I was pigheaded."

Green set up office at home in Rainham, Kent, sold 2,000 copies at sixpence each with his first attempt, and gained respect immediately with the quality of his contributors. Jack Crump, the national team manager, compiled subjective event ranking lists, a controversial element that drew much attention.

Monthly to begin with, but weekly from 1950, *Athletics Weekly*'s circulation grew to a peak of 30,000 in the mid-Eighties. To 1987, it had only three editors: Green (1945-68), Mel Watman (1968-84) and Barry Trowbridge (1984-87). Trowbridge departed when Emap took over in 1987 and sent it downmarket. Watman finally left the staff soon after, along with much of the loyal readership. Since then, several editors have come and gone and circulation has fallen, though it saw off the four-year challenge of *Athletics Today*, a rival weekly that closed in 1993.

Watman was adamant that all areas of the sport should be covered. Race walking was a case in point. "Probably 95 per cent of readers did not want walking cluttering up the pages, but I was determined that the minority interest should be represented," he said.

"In the earlier years there was also an anti-women's bias among our readers. For many years, we had only a page for them, called 'With The

Ladies'." Under Watman, *Athletics Weekly* spoke out vehemently against drugs and amateurism.

"We were campaigning for open athletics, meaning athletes could be paid and there would be professional administration. We were always calling for one governing body, which eventually came about. We were a quiet magazine but people had an affection for us. I think people appreciated that we had the best interests of athletics at heart."

The top athletes would use it to vent their views. Gordon Pirie had a letter published in 1967 complaining about British athletics wasting money on high-altitude training.

Headlines such as "Watch Out For Takeyuki Nakayama" characterised *Athletics Weekly*'s confidence in its own stride-length. There was wit too. "Two Legs In Search Of Eight Feet," was its headline on the ambitions of Geoff Parsons in the high jump.

Athletics Weekly has never missed an issue and today it is claiming a personal best, 116 pages. The London Marathon preview issue of 1983 was 120 pages, but A5 in size, not today's A4. Still, though, we miss the old *Athletics Weekly*, its neat format and epic features: ten pages on an East German sprinter (part one); a week later part two, another nine pages.

That was when *Athletics Weekly* was 40, the age when men in the sport become veterans. Let us hope that, as the magazine joins the over-50s, it can be wise again.



Green, the founding editor, displays a copy of the first edition of "AW"

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Trump promotions come in various guises. This one was reported to me by Romyne Rubin at the Vanderbilt (one of the four leading events in the United States).

Dealer East	Love all	IMP
♠ A87		
♥ 10985		
♦ A84		
♣ KJ98		
♠ 986	♠ 54	
♥ 72	♥ KAKQ763	
♦ QJ10975	♦ 63	
♣ 875	♣ 1052	
	♠ KJ1032	
	♥ 994	
	♦ K2	
	♣ A04	

Contract: Four Spades by South. Lead: Two of Hearts

East opened a weak Two Hearts and North-South finished in Four Spades. West led a heart that East won with the queen. East continued with the king of hearts. How should West plan his defence?

West knows that three rounds of hearts are going to stand up (East would not open Two Hearts with a seven-card suit). Do you now see what he wants his partner to do?

Consider what will happen if West cashes a third heart and continues with a fourth round. If the declarer ruffs low, West can ruff with the nine of spades; to force dummy's ace and so promote West's queen; and, if South ruffs high, West discards and now makes a trump trick.

Now look at the problem from East's point of view. How can he tell that it is correct to play a fourth round of hearts? What if South's

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Speed chess

A new world championship event for junior players has been set up in Disneyland, Paris. This is a speed chess event for players of 14 years or younger. The winners of the inaugural competitions were:

Girls under-12: Viktorija Milcic (Lithuania).

Boys under-12: Etienne Bacrot (France).

Girls under-14: Chau Thi Ngo Gao (Vietnam).

Boys under-14: Levon Aronian (Armenia).

Blindfold chess

Bacrot went on to further distinguish himself by defeating Anatoly Karpov, the Fide world champion, where the latter was playing blindfold.

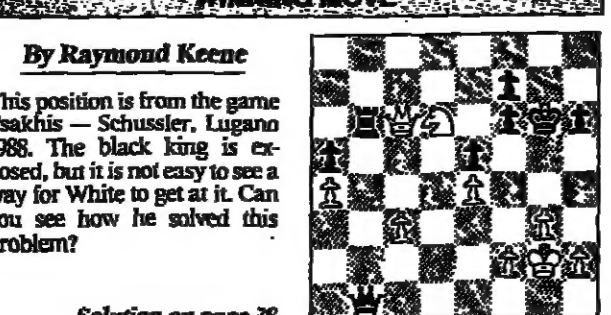
White: Anatoly Karpov
Black: Etienne Bacrot

Blindfold simultaneous

Disneyland, Paris
December 1995

English Opening	
1	♠ a4
2	♠ c3
3	♠ Nf3
4	♠ g3
5	♠ cxd5
6	♠ Bg2
7	♠ d4
8	♠ a3
9	♠ b4
10	♠ d3
11	♠ Bc3
12	♠ b5
13	♠ Bb6
14	♠ a4
1	♠ a5
2	♠ Nf6
3	♠ Nd5
4	♠ Nf6
5	♠ Bg2
6	♠ Be7
7	♠ d4
8	♠ Bf8
9	♠ Bf8
10	♠ Bf8
11	♠ Bf8
12	♠ Bf8
13	♠ Bf8
14	♠ Bf8

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



This position is from the game Psakhis — Schussler, Lugano 1988. The black king is exposed, but it is not easy to see a way for White to get at it. Can you see how he solved this problem?

Solution on page 38

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL	FOOTBALL	NETBALL
NATIONAL LEAGUE (NFL): San Francisco 37 Minnesota 30	FA CUP: Chelsea 2 Southampton 1; Oxford United 1 Bristol Rovers 2; Wimbledon 1 Ipswich 1; Portsmouth 1 Bristol City 1; Cardiff City 1; Rotherham 1; Luton 1	NATIONAL LEAGUE: Wyvern 51 Hereford 52; Worcester 44 Worcester 41; London 51; Exeter 29; Hertford Hornets 61; New Canaan 52
BASKETBALL	BOXING	RACKETS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Chicago 123 Boston 114; Utah 110 New Jersey 102; Sacramento 82 Vancouver 85	LONDON: British test-tube champion, John Line (Conservative) vs Chris Patten (Labour) was 8th round	QUEEN'S CLUB: Public schools championship: Devonians 1; Etonians 2; First round: N. Bailey (Eton) vs R. MacAndrew (Harrow) 15-15, 15-15; 2nd round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 3rd round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 4th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 5th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 6th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 7th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 8th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 9th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 10th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 11th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 12th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 13th round: N. Bailey vs R. MacAndrew 15-15, 15-15; 14th round: N. Bailey vs R. 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Simon Wilde on Test venues that suffer most from inclement weather

English cricket commanding a place in the sun

The past few wet weeks in South Africa may have been infuriating to cricketers and cricket-watchers alike, but they have at least succeeded in making the habit of staging the "summer game" in hopelessly inclement weather look less peculiarly English. That said, the historical evidence suggests that, pluvially speaking, the worst may now be over on England's tour.

Jokes about cricket and the English weather are as old as the hills, but they are fast becoming inappropriate. While recent experience suggests that it never rains but it pours in countries such as South Africa, India and Sri Lanka, England has become one of the most reliable places in the world to watch Test cricket.

It has been three years and 21 matches since an entire day's play was lost to rain in a Test match in England: in July 1992, the second day of the third Test match with Pakistan was lost at Old Trafford. On the other hand, in just the past three months overseas, Test matches between India and New Zealand in Madras and Cuttack have been ruined by heavy rain, as were England's visits to Verwoerdburg and Durban, where the third Test match went to a watery grave on Monday.

Historically, southern Africa remains the most reliable area in the world for uninterrupted Test cricket. Even with the loss of six days' play in the present Test series, 112 Test matches in South Africa have produced a total of only 11 blank days, or just 0.098 days lost per Test, a smaller ratio than any other Test-playing country.

Encouragingly, the venues

for the two remaining Test matches on England's tour, in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, are among the driest in the world. Port Elizabeth, where the fourth Test match starts on Boxing Day, has never lost a day's play in 13 Test matches, and Cape Town has had just one washout in 27 Tests. The fifth Test begins there on January 2.

Zimbabwe has maintained the region's good record, having lost only one day to rain in

the occasion of the Old Trafford Test, but, since 1980, first Leeds and then Lord's took over as the main water supplier at Tests in this country. Birmingham has by some margin the best record: only three washed-out days in 31 matches.

One of the reasons for England's improved record is the advances made in ground-covering equipment, such as the innovative "Brumbrella" at Edgbaston. With a large and busy professional circuit to support, many English county grounds have sophisticated machinery to cope with heavy rainfalls.

Other countries are not so well placed. Two years ago, Sri Lanka, who have fewer resources and are often expected to stage matches to fit around the domestic seasons of more senior nations, put on a Test match in Kandy during the rainy season, with the predictable result that only 12 overs were possible in five days. Such a fiasco has helped make Sri Lanka, with nine days lost in 27 Tests, the wettest country for Test cricket, followed by New Zealand and England.

West Indian Test grounds are curiously divided. Georgetown and Kingston are among the worst-hit venues. Bridgetown and Port of Spain among the best. Indeed, in weather terms, Barbados is the best place in the world to watch Test cricket, having not lost a day to rain in 31 matches.

Perhaps the least wise place to watch Test cricket is Durban, New Zealand, the most southerly of all the grounds to have staged Test cricket. It has lost eight days in nine matches, including all five when Pakistan paid a visit in 1989.

England's reputation for wetness was once well deserved. For generations, Manchester could almost guarantee to produce rain on

ten matches since it was elevated to Test status in 1992. Pakistan and Australia are the next best places to watch Test cricket. Sydney's record is poor and Australia's overall position owes much to Perth never having lost a day's play in 23 Tests and Adelaide having experienced only two in 53.

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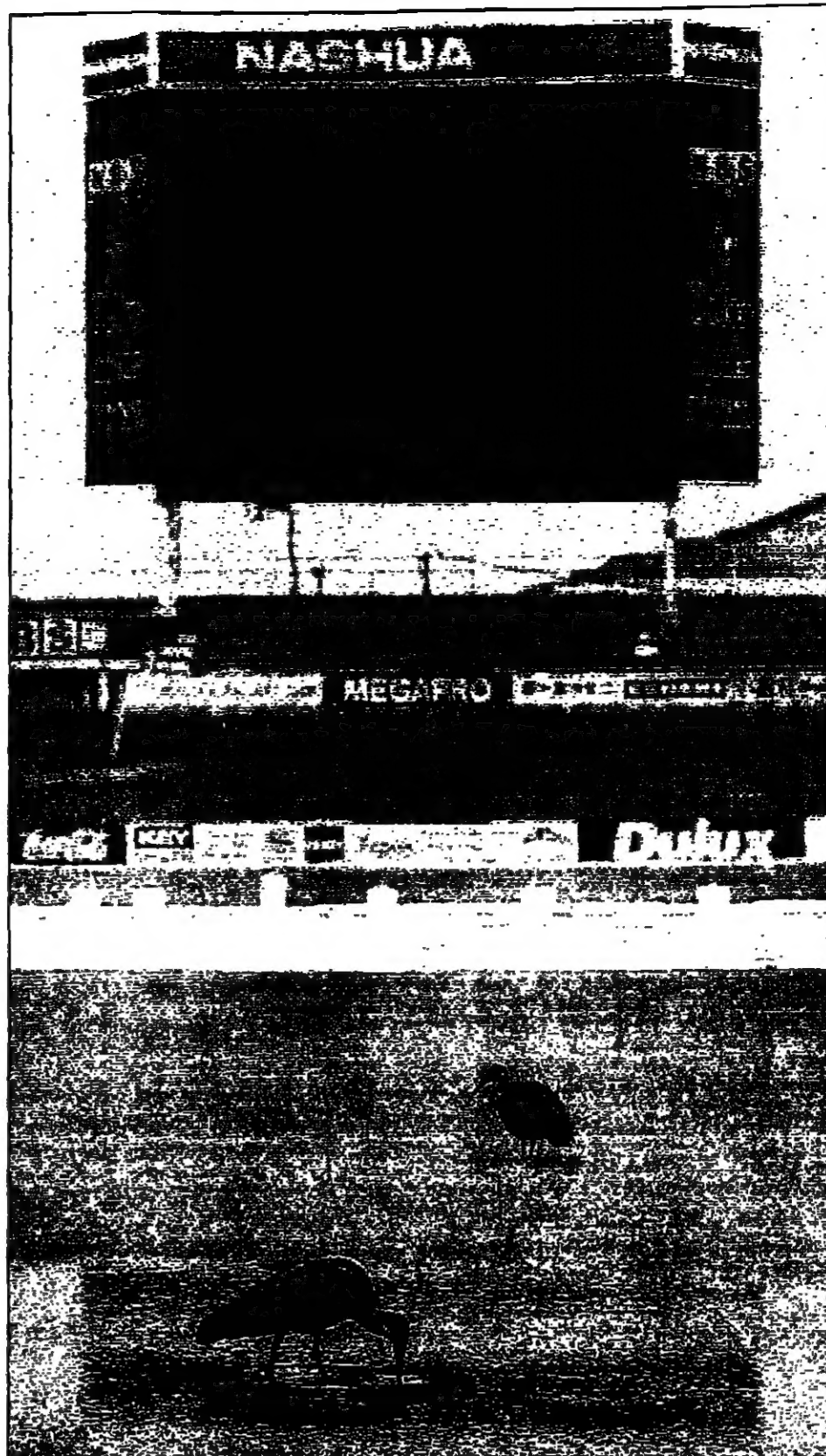
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Despite the heavy rain that plagued Durban during England's stay, Test cricket in South Africa has been less disrupted by the elements than in most other countries

Montgomery wins award

By JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

COLIN MONTGOMERIE has been named the Johnnie Walker golfer of the year for 1995. Montgomery, 32, had such a remarkable year, that was capped when he made sure of winning the order of merit for the third time in a row, that only one golfer mounted a serious challenge to the big Scot for this end-of-year honour.

That golfer was Sam Torrance, who played the golf of his life in 1995, giving new hope to the over-40s. Torrance, 42, was married at the beginning of the year and then

won three of the 26 events in which he competed on the European Tour. Wherever you looked in Europe last season, either Montgomery or Torrance was at the head of the field.

Montgomery, who was runner-up in the US PGA championship, had a stroke average of 69.70 for the 20 events in Europe in which he played, fractionally better than Torrance's 70.28 from 26 events. Montgomery had 302 birdies in his 73 rounds and was 146 under par, while Torrance was 132 under par.

A significant tribute paid to Montgomery is all the more meaningful because it was made by Johnny Miller, the American golfer. "He is as good a ball-striker as Greg Norman, which is saying a lot," Miller said. "It is almost uncanny how well Colin hits the ball with a big, loose Payne Stewart-type swing and that wrist action. I don't think Colin has a clue how he does it — but that doesn't matter. He does it."

Montgomery needs to win a major championship to confirm his place among the very best; and he still has to work on his behaviour. An outburst in the recent world championship in Jamaica was inexcusable. It was, though, about his only mistake in 1995.



Montgomery: top honour

Dear Diary,

Woke up 'sleep skateboarding'. Luckily I had my portable TV, with me so I didn't miss Moriah Carey and her gorgeous curly hair. Anyway, her lovely hit pop record 'Without You' steamed out of the mini speakers and I almost went straight into the back of a lamp-post. Almost. It reminded me of school. But I can't think why.

VH-1

Where music means something.

West Indies slide to third defeat

AUSTRALIA dealt a further blow to West Indies morale yesterday by inflicting their third successive defeat in the World Series limited-overs competition at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Australia won by 24 runs despite a vastly improved performance by West Indies. In reply to Australia's 249 for six from their 50 overs, West Indies subsided to 225 all out in 49.1 overs.

John Emburey, 43, will undertake twelfth-man duties when England A play Pakistan A in the third and final one-day international at the new Shekhupura Stadium today.

With the tour party down to 11 fit players, Emburey, the manager, is forced to don his whites once again as England A look to complete a 3-0 whitewash in the one-day matches.

England A are without the services of four players from their original party of 15. Jason Gallian has been drafted into the full England squad in South Africa, Jason Pooley has a damaged elbow and Ian Salisbury and Shaun Udal have returned home for personal reasons.

Scoreboard, page 37

Van der Schans adds fine finishing touch

By JENNY MACARTHUR

THE Olympia show jumping championships, that ended on Monday night with Wout-Jan van der Schans's surprise win on Leroy Brown in the Grand Prix, were the most successful in the 23-year history of the show. A record audience of 65,000 attended and the quality of jumping was higher than in any previous year.

Simon Brooks-Ward, the equestrian director and son of Raymond Brooks-Ward, the show's founder, was delighted at the outcome. "It's difficult to know where to go from here," he said. "It's just a great shame for the sport that the BBC decided not to televise the show in such a spectacular year."

The presence of the world's 14 top-ranked riders, led by Ludger Beerbaum, of Germany, the Olympic champion, had promised a high standard, but few could have predicted the consistency of the jumping that unfolded nightly. Beerbaum's 0.01 second victory over Nick Skelton, of Great Britain, on Dollar Girl, in the Volvo World Cup qualifier was one of the week's highlights.

Ironically, in the P&O European Ferries Grand Prix on Monday, the richest event of the week, the leading riders had to concede victory to van der Schans, the former Dutch three-day-equestrian who is ranked No 76 in the world. Van der Schans, whose previous best wins were in the Helsinki World Cup qualifiers of 1986 and 1989, was drawn first in the nine-horse jump-off. Leroy Brown, his powerful Oldenburg gelding, jumped faultlessly round, but his time of 35.89sec looked vulnerable.

Nick Skelton, on Everest Showtime, was up on the Dutchman's time, but, risking all, incurred four faults at the penultimate fence. John Whitaker, on Everest Welham, and Franke Sloothaak, the world champion, on San Patrignano Welbair, were both comfortably inside van der Schans's time, but clipped the last fence.

It was to prove an expensive fence for Skelton and Sloothaak. Apart from the £16,000 first prize at stake, the riders were the only contenders left in the Champagne Challenge, in which Taittinger offered to give the weight of the rider and his horse in champagne if they won the Grand Prix and had also finished in the top five of the World Cup qualifiers. Thirty cases had been set aside.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (°C)	Last snow
ANDORRA					
Soldeu	30 100	good varied	fair	line	16/12
		(Wonderful skiing on empty pistes; 13 of 21 lifts open)			
AUSTRIA					
Mayrhofen	5 30	good varied	closed	log	4 18/12
St Anton	15 120	good powder	fair	line	4 18/12
		(Good skiing generally; snow machines topping up)			
Schladming	40 80	good varied	good	about	2 18/12
		(Good skiing on empty pistes; 80 per cent of lifts open)			
Seil	20 50	good varied	closed	cloud	0 18/12
		(Conditions good overall with some powder available)			
FRANCE					
Alpe d'Huez	40 100	good varied	fair	fine	4 17/12
		(Good snowed skiing; odd rocky/grassy patch)			
Avoriaz	35 65	good varied	fair	sun	2 18/12
		(Mostly good but some runs wearing; 11 of 49 lifts open)			
C Chavalier	30 100	good varied	art	sun	2 17/12
		(Skiing good on empty pistes; more lifts now opening)			
Tignes	15 100	good varied	art	fine	1 18/12
		(Skiing still restricted to Grande Motte; good though)			
Val d'Isère	15 100	fair varied	art	sun	2 18/12
		(Open pistes OK but wearing slightly)			
ITALY					
Corviglia	30 250	good varied	fair	sun	7 18/12
		(More lifts and runs open because of recent new snow)			
SWITZERLAND					
C Montana	5 50	fair poor	closed	sun	3 18/12
		(Dusting of new snow but skiing still limited)			
Mürren	20 80	good powder	closed	fine	3 18/12
		(Improved conditions with recent new snow; more forecast)			
Verbier	30 100	good varied	closed	fine	4 18/12
		(Good skiing generally; Aletsch, Rungellets and Lac des Vaux)			
Wengen	20 30	good powder	fair	fine	0 18/12
		(Snow conditions generally good; nine of 23 lifts open)			

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial.

Greatest show on earth?

Night Waves in Las Vegas. Radio 3, 10.45pm.

First a railroad junction, then a mobsters' playground, then a gamblers' Mecca. There are still 70,000 slot machines swallowing and regurgitating dollars in Las Vegas, but now it is a vast entertainment complex, too, where 5,000,000 people stage extravaganzas the like of which the world has never seen. Palmer — has never seen the like. A volcano erupts every 15 minutes, a tropical rainforest is the way into a hotel. Palmer surrenders shamelessly to it all, and producer Anthony Denslow implicitly goes along with him. It makes even Disney's various wonderlands seem like sideshows in a travelling funfair.

Points of Departure. Radio 4, 7.20pm.

I can recommend this without having heard it. My confidence springs from many years of listening to the radio and television reporting of the vast, vast broadcaster Charles Wheeler. He has served the BBC with distinction for 48 years. His areas of operation have included Europe, India and — best of all, in my opinion — America. In 1991, he was awarded the James Cameron Prize. Tonight, Wheeler focuses on the time he covered the Hungarian uprising of 1956 for *Panorama*. Michael Peacock, then masterminding television's "window on the world", says that Wheeler "is a crusader for the betterment of the human condition".

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

FM Stereo. 4.00am Chris Warren 6.30 Chris Evans 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa Vasey. Incl. 12.30-12.45pm Newsweek; and at 1.15 The Net 3.00 Mark Goodier. Incl. at 5.30-5.45 Newsweek; 6.15 The Net 7.00 Evening Session 8.00 Lee Lewis 10.00 Mark Radcliffe. 12.00 Wendy Lloyd

RADIO 2

FM Stereo. 6.00am Sarah Kennedy 6.15 Pause for Thought 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.15 Pause for Thought 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.00 Anna Young 12.00 Debbie Tucker 3.30 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Jim Lloyd 8.00 Over the Water (24) 8.30 Mrs Asquith Explains Her Recs (24) 9.00 Maccosque 9.15 Horizons (97) 9.30 Nigel Ogden 10.30 The Jamesons 12.00am Steve Madden 3.00 Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am Morning Reports. Incl. at 5.45 Wake Up to Wogan 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 8.30 The Magazine, with Diana Madill. Incl. at 10.35 Euronews, and at 11.00 News. Natural History 12.00 Midday with Mark. Incl. at 12.45pm Moneyweek and at 1.15 Entertainment News 2.05 Russia on Five. Incl. at 3.45 Entertainment News 4.00 John Inverdale Nationwide. Incl. at 5.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra 7.25 The World's Football Night. Fourth round of the Coca-Cola Cup 10.05 News Talk. with Mike Baker 11.00 Night Extra. Incl. at 11.15 The Financial Times 12.00am Concert. Also 10.05 All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am Sandy War 7.00 Simon Bates 10.00 Jonathan King 12.00 Tommy Boyd 2.00pm Anna Rieburn 4.00 Scott Chisholm and Lower Turner 7.00 Sean Bogan 8.00 Mox Dee 10.00am James White 1.00-5.00pm Ian Collins

WORLD SERVICE

All times in GMT. 5.00am Newswatch 6.00am Newswatch 6.30am Newswatch 7.00am Newswatch 7.30am Newswatch 8.00am Newswatch 8.30am Newswatch 9.00am Newswatch 9.30am Newswatch 10.00am Newswatch 10.30am Newswatch 11.00am Newswatch 11.30am Newswatch 12.00am Newswatch 12.30am Newswatch 1.00am Newswatch 1.30am Newswatch 2.00am Newswatch 2.30am Newswatch 3.00am Newswatch 3.30am Newswatch 4.00am Newswatch 4.30am Newswatch 5.00am Newswatch 5.30am Newswatch 6.00am Newswatch 6.30am Newswatch 7.00am Newswatch 7.30am Newswatch 8.00am Newswatch 8.30am Newswatch 9.00am Newswatch 9.30am Newswatch 10.00am Newswatch 10.30am Newswatch 11.00am Newswatch 11.30am Newswatch 12.00am Newswatch 12.30am Newswatch 1.00am Newswatch 1.30am Newswatch 2.00am Newswatch 2.30am Newswatch 3.00am Newswatch 3.30am Newswatch 4.00am Newswatch 4.30am Newswatch 5.00am Newswatch 5.30am Newswatch 6.00am Newswatch 6.30am Newswatch 7.00am Newswatch 7.30am Newswatch 8.00am Newswatch 8.30am Newswatch 9.00am Newswatch 9.30am Newswatch 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Arturo, Pete, Dud and the bare-faced lyres

Tragedy is reaching operatic proportions in *EastEnders* (BBC1). In fact the whole thing could transfer to Covent Garden and bridge the class gap between cultures at a single stroke. At the market stall, young Marco cradles his apples and sings a lament for his persecuted father, indoors Polina delivers an aria of unbearable poignancy with her hands in her cardigan pockets. And in his friendless cell, an innocent old man with a look of confusion and defeat reads a Christmas card, with big tears rolling down. He howls in anguish and, as his voice rises, it is matched by a crescendo in the brass. The audience gasps, the curtain falls, applause. As everyone queues up, murmuring, for a smoked salmon sandwich, they agree that this *Tribulation of Arturo* (trans. *Arthur Loses his Marbles*) is the finest thing on the stage in years.

While everyone in the real world is praying for Christmas not to happen (something which surely, in Albert Square they are laying foundations for a real humdinger. The most difficult thing for a soap opera to handle is mental illness, yet two (or possibly three) stories in *EastEnders* now turn on nutcases. Frank Butcher (Mike Reid) is scheduled to reappear on Christmas Day, and has had the highest instantly build-up since Ophelia described the condition of Hamlet with his wists all unguayed. "Frank is still very fragile," his psychiatric social worker told Pat last night, and then went on to talk about impulsive behaviour and false ideas. Oh lumme. Frank used to be the single reliable source of jokes, too.

Meanwhile the new mystery man on the Square (Felix, played by Harry Landis) was last night left weeping on the cellar floor of his barber shop, after a mix-up

and scuffle brought his throat into contact with Grant Mitchell's fist. Whenever people say "You don't watch *EastEnders*, do you? It's all gloom and doom!" I holly deny it. No, the *EastEnders* people are going for full-blown tragedy here. They have noticed that at the heart-breaking climax to Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman plants carrots and beet in his garden. So at visiting time Arthur (Arturo) suddenly bursts out "I've got to get the broad beans started!" And at the end of the episode, for the first time in *EastEnders* history, Polina's words of concern are heard above a silent image of Arturo, weeping for all he's worth.

Whether soap opera can deliver catharsis is an interesting point. Since it never actually stops, the catharsis of leaving the theatre and getting a couple of big drinks is not avail-

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

— the wasted talent, the indulgence, the boredom, the need to get laughs constantly. But along the way, this *Omniibus* brought in mental surprises. In 1973, Cook appeared with Dudley Moore on Mavis Nicholson's afternoon chat-show, and they bickered publicly on a sofa about Peter's drink problem. Such a revealing conversation would never occur on a public sofa these days. Meanwhile his old buddies and cronies offered their considered, articulate views of his character. What a dreadful posthumous fate awaits all acquaintances of Jonathan Miller.

Peter Cook's only stated regret was that he once saved David Frost from drowning. Aside from this strange and awful lapse, he had much to be proud of. "What could be worse than achieving one's potential?" he yelled, gestulating wildly at a Pebble Mill presenter in his last ever interview. He looked puffy and uncontrolled,

and it was not the best way to remember him. Cook was an incredibly funny man, whose surreal ideas have influenced modern comedians in this country. Even when calling late-night phone-ins, his timing was mastery. Dudley Moore was privileged to corpse into a sandwich at his side.

Pete and Dud once did a sketch about Heaven. Dressed in white raincoats, white flat caps and white muffers, they looked at the lyres in their hands and appeared initially confused. "Is this Heaven, Pete?" Pete looked around with increasing alarm. "Bloody Eli," he replied. Soon, however, they were saying how boring it was, facing eternity with just a small harp for company. "Here today, here tomorrow," averred Pete, finally. "That's the saying in angelic circles."

The great achievement of last night's *Network First* (ITV) was

that by spending a full hour on first-hand experience of angels, it brought all into one's own life. *Entertaining Angels* *Unwashed* produced an endless succession of testimonies, conducive to the wrong sort of intimations of immortality. But I did have a thought. Perhaps an angel could appear to Arturo on Christmas Day! Taking his hand, he could lead Arturo towards a heavenly light! Good grief, you don't think I've guessed it, do you? Bloody Eli.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (50310)
- 7.00 BBC Breakfast News (47690223)
- 10.00 Kilroy (s) (4522653)
- 10.00 News (Ceefax) regional news and weather (9710759)
- 10.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (5736710)
- 10.30 Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (36662)
- 12.00 News (Ceefax) regional news and weather (8310001)
- 12.05pm Pabst Mill: David Attenborough Special (s) (5586333)
- 12.50 Regional News and weather (6441278)
- 1.00 One O'Clock News (Ceefax) (30778)
- 1.30 Neighbours (Ceefax) (s) (6655827) 1.50 HawkEye (8361925) 2.35 Holiday (s) (Ceefax) (s) (519136) 3.05 Timekeepers (s) (6542556)
- 3.30 Arts in Your Panta (s) (968136) 3.50 ChuckleVision (s) (9648372) 4.10 Get Your Own Back (Ceefax) (s) (1673662) 4.35 The Queen's Nose (Ceefax) (s) (1944381)
- 5.00 Newsround (Ceefax) (3385198)
- 5.10 Blue Peter (Ceefax) (s) (8743827)
- 5.25 Neighbours (s) (Ceefax) (s) (419846) NORTHERN IRELAND: 5.35 Inside Ulster
- 6.00 Six O'Clock News (Ceefax) and weather (575)
- 6.30 Regional News magazines (827) NORTHERN IRELAND: 6.30 Neighbours 6.55 On the Way to Bethlehem 6.58 Inside Ulster News
- 7.00 This is Your Life (Ceefax) (s) (9020)
- 7.30 Here and Now. Presented by Sue Lawley (339)
- 8.00 Paul Daniels' Secrets. (Ceefax) (s) (740848)
- 8.50 Points of View (955223)
- 9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Ceefax) regional news and weather (7643)

BBC2

- 7.00am Breakfast News (Signing) (9631136)
- 7.15 Lasse (s) (2533952) 7.40 Albert the 5th Musketier (s) (Ceefax) (7455594) 8.05 Take Two (s) (Ceefax) (s) (2823486)
- 8.35 The Record. Yesterday in Parliament (s) (7256575) 9.00 Harder than Everest. An Australian expedition to climb Gasherbrum IV (s) (3033555) 9.50 True Laid's Tricks of the Trade (s) (381405) 10.00 Playdays (s) (113551)
- 10.25 FILM: Meet John Doe (1941, b/w) starring Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck (5003920)
- 12.30pm Making Candles (s) (65556) 1.00 Melvin and Maurice's Music-o-rama (s) (4467162) 1.15 Movie Magic (s) (4424875) 1.40 Turning Points (7309407) 1.45 Even More of Glynis Christian's Entertaining Microwave (1522762) 2.00 Understanding Cats (60136310) 2.15 Expedition Kingfisher. Wildlife documentary (1567402)
- 3.00 News (Ceefax), regional news and weather (8735643) 3.05 Westminster (2501196) 3.55 News (Ceefax) and weather (822779)
- 4.00 Today's the Day (s) (440) 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (s) (952) 5.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show (Ceefax) (s) (502488) 5.40 Miss-Takes (s) (400223)
- 6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation. (Ceefax) (s) (304372)
- 6.45 Buck Rogers in the 25th Century. (s) (999759)
- 7.30 Top Gear Motorsport's Review of the Year from the Grosvenor House Hotel in London. (Ceefax) (s) (581)
- 8.00 Slice of Life. British food over the past 50 years. (Ceefax) (8310)
- 8.30 University Challenge chaired by Jeremy Paxman. An all-women team representing the Open University meet an all-male team from Newcastle University. (Ceefax) (s) (2117)
- 9.00 Modern Times: Man Seeks Woman. (Ceefax) (s) (494861)
- 9.50 Court in the Act (s) (Ceefax) (s) (267333)

CHOICE

Modern Times: Man Seeks Woman
BBC2, 9.00pm
Taking its cue from the fact that there are a million more single men than women in Britain today, Susanna White's film mines the rich emotional vein of the lonely hearts column and profiles three unattached males who would prefer not to stay that way. The first is a man who Harry Enfield would be hard put to caricature. He is a double-glazer who drives a fast car, calls himself the Italian Stallion, and owns a crocodile. The second is "no oil painting", drives a Reliant Robin and lives with his parents in a caravan. The third is a reasonable chap who just wants a mother for his two children. The men are articulate, the dates doomed and the programme full of pathos.



Ray Davies, maverick pop icon (BBC2, 11.20pm)

I'm Not Like Everybody Else: The World of Ray Davies and the Kinks
BBC2, 11.20pm

Ray Davies is responsible for some of the most enduring and quintessentially English pop songs ever written. He is the creative spirit behind *Waterloo Sunset*, *Autumn Almanac*, *Lola* and a host of other hits that encapsulate suburban life. Vanessa Engle's film is a brave attempt to pin that spirit down and the nearly gets away with it. Obsessively introspective and by nature a private man, Davies opens up about his music and his personality. He is not as forthcoming about other subjects. The sibling tension with Dave, the doldrums of the 1980s, the sexuality and the clip career are either ignored or sidestepped. Archive clips, excerpts from a recent solo acoustic gig and comments from the band give the tale added perspective.

Do Vampire Bats Have Friends?
Channel 4, 9.00pm
Yes, they do. They share food with other non-related individuals and therefore display altruism. But is this evidence of consciousness? Christopher Sykes's film addresses the emotive issue of whether animals possess consciousness as we know it or if they are merely self-automata — robots programmed to act by stored memory. There is fascinating footage of tests science has devised to show the extent of the animals' cognitive behaviour. But conclusive proof eludes the baffles. What is consciousness anyway? Is it self-awareness, the knowledge of one's own mortality or the process of logical thought? As one expert says, it is difficult enough to know what goes on in a human mind let alone that of animals.

Britannia
BBC1, 9.30pm
After 42 years of service the Royal Yacht *Britannia* is reaching the end of her seagoing life. It has been the Queen's floating palace and symbol of British grandeur since 1953 but is now regarded more as a museum piece. Filming during the Queen's state visit to South Africa in March this year, the makers were allowed access to every corner of the yacht from the steam-driven engine rooms to the state apartments. As the crew paid out in pilings to keep down the noise and preserve the wood flooring, the accent is on the endless preparations that go into making the stately ship fit for a Queen. The tone of the film is reverential, as if wishing to preserve the mystique of the vessel for future generations.



Mercedes Ruehl in *Lost in Yonkers* (Sky Movies, 10pm)

THE DISNEY CHANNEL
Sky Movies Gold from 10pm to 4am.
6.00am *Unsubtle Time* (421101) 6.30 *Muppet Babies* (3222440) 7.00 *Where the Pooh* (968318) 7.30 *Ducktales* (3000593) 8.00 *Chip 'n' Dale* (2949279) 8.30 *Wonderland* (2946701) 9.00 *Franny's Rock* (2946191) 9.30 *Pooh Corner* (2946265) 10.00 *Dumbo's Circus* (3247023) 10.30 *Quick Quack* (2946705) 11.00 *Wild About* (3003481) 11.30 *FLM: The Nick of Time* (3003481) 12.00 *FLM: The Nick of Time* (3003481) 1.30 *Unsubtle Time* (421101) 2.00 *Where the Pooh* (968318) 2.30 *Ducktales* (3000593) 3.00 *Chip 'n' Dale* (2949279) 3.30 *Wonderland* (2946701) 4.00 *Franny's Rock* (2946191) 4.30 *Pooh Corner* (2946265) 5.00 *Dumbo's Circus* (3247023) 5.30 *Quick Quack* (2946705) 6.00 *Wild About* (3003481) 6.30 *FLM: The Nick of Time* (3003481) 7.00 *Where the Pooh* (968318) 7.30 *Ducktales* (3000593) 8.00 *Chip 'n' Dale* (2949279) 8.30 *Wonderland* (2946701) 9.00 *Franny's Rock* (2946191) 9.30 *Pooh Corner* (2946265) 10.00 *Dumbo's Circus* (3247023) 10.30 *Quick Quack* (2946705) 11.00 *Wild 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Malcolm stays on sidelines

Fraser surplus
to England's
requirements

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN DURBAN

JASON GALLIAN, England's emergency batting recruit, completed a tortuous, 30-hour journey here from Pakistan yesterday and was given rather less time to recover before starting a three-day match against a South African Tertiary XI in Pietermaritzburg this morning. The more significant aspect of the team selection, however, was the continued exclusion of Angus Fraser, which must now raise serious doubts about his future at Test level.

By once again naming Peter Martin and Mark Ilett, ahead of Fraser and Devon Malcolm, the England selectors have effectively ruled out changing the seam attack for the fourth Test, that starts in Port Elizabeth on Tuesday. Indeed, as the final Test follows immediately, neither of the experienced pair is likely to feature again in the series.

The omission of Malcolm is no surprise, as the pitches for the two remaining Tests are forecast to be slow, but Fraser will be stung by the pointed way that he has been shelved, for it had widely been assumed that he would complete the series as the solid pivot of the England attack.

It is no secret that Raymond Illingworth, the England manager, has never applied for membership of Fraser's fan club and views much of his recent bowling as bland; but Illingworth's indifference has often been successfully countered by the desire of Michael Atherton, the captain, to have Fraser's dependability at his disposal. Now, it seems, even that support has been withdrawn.

Although Illingworth is technically the sole tour selector, in practice, he habitually consults his captain. On the first morning of the Durban

Test, last Thursday, Atherton himself proposed the adventurous shift to a novice attack featuring the swing of Martin and Ilett. Illingworth, who had mentally formulated the same combination, cheerfully agreed.

An hour into the match, the selection was looking less than inspired, but Martin finished with four wickets and Ilett three, both ultimately bowling



Gallian: into the fray

well enough to convince Atherton and Illingworth that they should be retained.

As one who bowls more than most, more than most, more than most, into form, there can be no way back for Fraser on this tour. He bowled limply in the first innings of the Johannesburg Test, three weeks ago, and, despite improving substantially as the game progressed, he has played no first-class cricket since. A splendid servant to England, either side of his career-threatening pelvic injury, his stabilising role in the side seems increasingly likely to pass to Martin, three years his junior and still improving.

The one member of the third-Test attack left out today is Dominic Cork, but, although he finished wicketless

in the South Africa innings, nothing should be read into this apart from the sensible wish to conserve the energies of the best, and thus most overworked, of England's bowlers. Mike Watkinson deputises, with Illingworth explaining that there may yet be cause to play two spin bowlers in Port Elizabeth or Cape Town.

This policy, dear to the manager's heart, is improbable because of the unreliable nature of the England batting. Only Atherton and Graeme Hick have reached 60 in this series and, although both went on to make big centuries, the persistence with which Alec Stewart, Robin Smith and Graham Thorpe are missing out is causing concern.

Gallian has been summoned to provide the "stodge", as Atherton calls it, and this personable young man was smiling broadly on arrival, despite his arduous journey. He will bat in the top three today, though England did not confirm that he will open.

After a chastening start to his Test career, when he had his finger broken on his debut at Edgbaston and returned a month later only to be out without scoring at the Oval, Gallian was not surprised to be omitted from the senior tour. "The chairman said they had picked the seven best batsmen and I think he was correct," he said dismally.

However, after an outstanding A-team tour, including 156 in the second five-day international in Rawalpindi, he has earned another chance. "It is a great Christmas present," he said, "but I must just be patient and, wherever I bat, set my own agenda and play my own way."

Remarkably, he may start today, for, after three days, four nights and an alert for troops to deal with flood chaos, it stopped raining here yesterday, allowing the resumption of Durban's beach culture and, just maybe, the resumption of cricket.

Place in the sun, page 38



Alberto Tomba, of Italy, powers to his first victory in a World Cup race this season in Madonna di Campiglio yesterday. Report, page 37

Uefa in conflict over limit on foreigners

BY DAVID MADDOCK
AND RUSSELL KEMPSON

THE Premier League and Uefa, football's European governing body, are on a collision course with the European Union over the legality of the three-foreign-player restriction. The Premier League's legal advisers met on Friday to determine whether the existing rule — restricting clubs in Uefa competitions to naming three players from outside the British Isles in their 14-man squads — has any legal foundation.

However, in the wake of the Jean-Marc Bosman ruling in the European Court of Justice last week, Uefa and the EU's 15 national football associations have been warned that they will be flouting European law if they attempt to uphold the quota system.

Padraig Flynn, the EU social affairs commissioner, said: "From now on, nationality restrictions are illegal in European-level club competitions. I expect those affected to take the necessary steps to change their rules." Last night, though, the Premier League insisted that it would be taking no such step until legal advice has been sought.

Uefa has adopted an even more determined stance. It has said that it will ignore the court ruling and insists that it will not change the rules of its 49-member federation because of a court decision in the 15-member EU.

Another 24 hours of rumour and counter-rumour, with few facts but plenty of fiction, ended yesterday with the managerial soap opera of the Endsleigh Insurance League first division no nearer its

concluding episode. For followers of Luton Town, the issue appears straightforward. Terry Westley was pushed before he could jump and left Kenilworth Road "by mutual consent" on Monday. David Kohler, the Luton chairman, has since spoken with Mike Walker, the former

Sports books 36

Everton and Norwich City manager, and Lennie Lawrence, formerly of Bradford City, Charlton Athletic and Middlesbrough.

"They are both good men and we were impressed with them," Kohler said, "but we have two or three other names in the ring and we will not be rushing into any decision." Walker had been hoping to

take over at Leicester City at the weekend as he was interviewed by Martin George, the Leicester chairman, on Friday. However, the availability of Martin O'Neill, who resigned as manager of Norwich on Sunday, has thrown a spanner in the works.

It appears, though, that Walker may have to bank on Luton providing him with a return to management after 13 months out of the game. Talks between O'Neill and Norwich broke down, without any change of heart by the Irishman, and it is now believed that Leicester and Norwich are discussing terms of compensation for O'Neill.

Leicester negotiated a reported £750,000 in compensation from Wolverhampton Wanderers, after Mark McGhee resigned two weeks

ago and resurfaced at Molineux. Part of it could be used to smooth O'Neill's departure from Carrow Road.

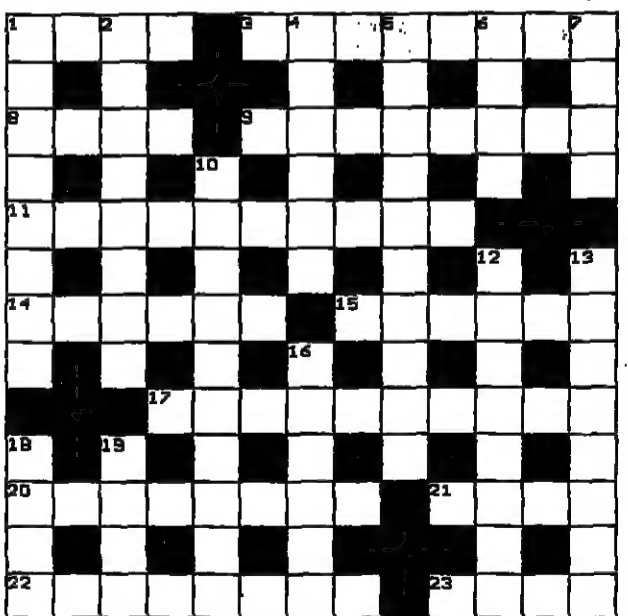
That would still leave the question of who takes his place. Mel Machin, the Bournemouth manager and former assistant manager at Norwich, has been mentioned, as has Orvaldo Ardiles.

Howard Kendall yesterday made his first signing as Sheffield United manager when he agreed to pay Manchester City £350,000 for Michel Vonk, the Holland defender.

Arthur Jorge, formerly the coach of Portugal, has been appointed to replace Roy Hodgson as manager of Switzerland. Hodgson, who led Switzerland to the finals of the 1994 World Cup and the 1996 European championship, now coaches Internazionale.

TIMES TWO
CROSSWORD

No 657



ACROSS

- 1 Horse's ankle; a wine (4)
- 3 Storage recess; its love self-ish (8)
- 8 Dark gloom (4)
- 9 Repugnantly disgusting (8)
- 11 Band together against outsider (5,5)
- 14 Storage container; cheque writer (6)
- 15 The weaver (MND) (6)
- 17 Profound contemplation (5,5)
- 20 Annoying thing (8)
- 21 Monstrous giant (4)
- 22 Space between arch curve and mouldings (8)

DOWN

- 2 Gas, used for light (4)
- 1 A killing (8)
- 2 NCO; of the body (8)
- 4 Pandemonium (6)
- 5 Jarndyce novel (Dickens) (5,5)
- 6 County; river; Eden its earl (4)
- 7 Act; legal document (4)
- 10 Had fun; famous (10)
- 12 Hard contest (8)
- 13 (Highest) heaven (poet.) (8)
- 16 Sudden slight pain (6)
- 18 Prejudice (4)
- 19 Operatic solo number (4)

SOLUTION TO No 656
ACROSS: 1 Vanity Fair 7 Algebra 8 Amiss 10 Bandeau
11 Clove 12 Prompt 13 Persia 17 Mafia 18 Ashamed
21 Yacht 22 Revises 23 Brass tacks
DOWN: 1 Vegan 2 Noble 3 Tencap 4 Flanerie 5 In iron
6 Namby-pamby 9 Stewardess 13 Officer 14 Plautus
16 Carrot 19 Havoc 20 Moses

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD NO 652
In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

ACROSS: 1 Child's play 8 Ancient 9 Scene 10 Poll 11 Con trick
13 House 14 Alive 16 Clavicle 17 Maim 20 Baloo 21 Queries
24 Unrequited

DOWN: 1 Clamp 2 Incalculable 3 Dyed 4 Pathos 5 Alsatian
6 Semifinalist 7 Heckle 12 Demijohn 13 Hecuba 15 Clique
18 Mused 19 Peru

THE NAMES OF THE FIRST AND SECOND PRIZE-WINNERS IN THE TIMES TWO CROSSWORD COMPETITION NO 652 WILL BE PUBLISHED TOMORROW.

Saracens optimistic of securing Sella

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SARACENS, the recently-incorporated north London rugby union club, are cautiously optimistic that Philippe Sella will make himself available for their next season. Were those hopes to be borne out, it would be a tremendous boost to a club that has always lived in the shadow of Harlequins and Wasps.

Sella, 33, announced last night his intention of playing no more international rugby, the last of his 110 caps for France having come against England in June in the play-off for third place in the World Cup. A season in London would, however, increase the business contacts that Sella seeks, and although Leicester seek to take him to Welford Road, they believe that he will stay in the capital.

"We are interested in any quality player, especially of Sella's type," Bruce Millar, a Saracens spokesman, said. In other business trips to England, Sella has given time to coaching at a couple of junior clubs and, were he to commit himself to a first division club, they could reasonably be assured of his best efforts.

"If we are really going to the marketplace to find exciting people in the backs, then the

place to look is France and Australia," Millar said.

The advantage for a Frenchman is that, moving from an EC country requires only a seven-day qualification period. There has been speculation in Italy that Michael Lynagh, the former Australia stand-off half, now with Treviso, has been offered a contract by an English club, but Lynagh would have to serve a 180-day qualification.

Scots take their hats off to tradition

David Rhys Jones on the
change of heart affecting
women bowlers' heads

A MILWAUKEE Brewers baseball cap has proved to be a hat too far for the women bowlers of Scotland. The cap was just one of many outlandish fashions of headgear that created a furore on the greens last summer, prompting women bowlers north of the border to perform an unexpected volte-face in Edinburgh last week.

Scotland's women bowlers, who, two years ago, voted to end more than 70 years of tradition and go hatless, have now voted to put their hats back on, at least for their national championships. As one convert put it: "The variety of horrendous headgear at Ayr during the summer had to be seen to be believed."

The historic decision, made at the annual meeting of the Scottish Women's Bowling Association (SWBA) two years ago, preceded a dispensation for the British Isles championships and home international series at Llandrindod Wells in 1993, when all competitors — except most of the conservative English team — gratefully went bareheaded. The English Women's Bowling Association, in spite of the relaxations elsewhere, still prefers that hats are worn at all competitions.

Since women formed their national associations in the 1920s, hats have been part of the uniform, not only on the green, but also on the way to the match, and in the clubhouse, too. Gloves, and tights, of the correct denier, of course, are also expected, may required.

A stubborn refusal to bring the uniform (designed circa 1926) up-to-date has, critics say, stunted the growth of the

women's game. The average age of competitors in the men's championships has plummeted in recent years, but comparatively few young women are prepared to submit themselves to the hats-tights-gloves routine.

Grass-roots bowlers, forced to wear tights on a hot summer's day, or a hat in a high wind, often grumble among themselves, but the decisions are made at a



The conventional cloche, vulnerable to high winds, but back in favour

higher level, where "standards" and "traditional values" hold sway.

By the time that players have reached international status, they must have grown used to dressing in what amounts to period costume, including the cloche-style hats, with batbands always worn with the bow on the left-hand side. Even if they would like to throw caution — and the hats — to the winds, they must think twice, because dissent would threaten their international careers.

When Eleanor Allan, the SWBA secretary, announced in Edinburgh two years ago that hats would no longer have to be worn during the Scottish championships, spontaneous cheers raised the roof.

"Everyone was thrilled," Allan said, "but this summer, things went wrong at Ayr because it was so hot. People started covering their heads with anything they could lay their hands on and the result was unbelievable. You name it, they wore it. Our flagship event looked a mess."

At the annual meeting in Freemasons' Hall, chaired by the aptly-named June Bowler, the SWBA treasurer, the council intended to float the idea of keeping hats an optional item, but adding a "hats-if-worn-must-be-regulation" ruling. The floor disagreed.

The motion making hats compulsory again in the Scottish championships was passed overwhelmingly, but Allan has confirmed that the ruling will not affect the British championships at Leamington Spa in June, when players of all four home countries will be allowed to let their hair down — if so inclined.

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